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THE HEAVENLY SESSION OF OUR LORD

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE

BY THE REV.

ARTHUR J. TAIT, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF RIDLEY HALL, CAMBRIDGE
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL
AUTHOR OF "LECTURE OUTLINES ON THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES"

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PREFACE

BISHOP WESTCOTT, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (p. 230), makes the following statement:

> *The modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven His Passion, "offering His blood" on behalf of men, has no foundation in this Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work. He pleads, as older writers truly expressed the thought, by His Presence on the Father's Throne.*

It was the desire to verify the closing words of this statement that first prompted the study the results of which are set forth in this book. Additional incentive was given by a remark of a friend to the effect that the words of the Creed, *He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty*, had no moral content for him. That remark also led to an enlargement of the scope of the inquiry, so that the objective which I set before myself became the discovery of the opinions which had been held as to the significance in general of the Session of our Lord at the right hand of the Father, and not merely as to the nature and mode of His heavenly Intercession.

One of the impressions left upon my mind as a result of the research is that while it would not be accurate to

say that the doctrine of the Session has been neglected (the following pages will give evidence that in the writings of the Fathers and of the Reformation divines the subject received a good deal of attention), it must nevertheless be admitted that the treatment which it has received has been very largely incidental in character.

There are the sections of considerable length allotted to this Article of the Creed in the expositions of Bishop Pearson and Dr. Isaac Barrow; there are also an *opusculum* of G. C. Knapp entitled *De Jesu Christo ad dextram Dei sedente*, and the recently published work of Professor Swete, *The Heavenly Ministry of Our Lord*. But when we have mentioned these, there is not left very much (so far as my knowledge goes) to chronicle in the way of attempts to treat the doctrine of the Session with any measure of completeness.

I am not unmindful of the existence of weighty works on some particular aspect of the doctrine, such as Dr. Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood*, or of the more general references which are found in textbooks of Christian doctrine and Commentaries on Holy Scripture, but the treatment of the subject which these contain is, in intention, either partial or cursory.

And yet the subject is one whose importance it would be difficult to overestimate. And in saying this, I am thinking not merely of the fact of the heavenly ministry of our Lord, but also of the nature and manner of that ministry as determined by the statements of the Session. For although the Session cannot be conceived of as a physical posture, it does not therefore become meaningless and void of significance. And our conception of the nature and manner of our Lord's heavenly ministry must be definitely limited to such ideas as are compatible with the thought of Christ's "presence on the Father's

Throne." We are not at liberty, for example, to think of Christ's heavenly Intercession in any way that we please. We may not introduce into our conception of that priestly ministration any idea which is out of harmony with the thought of the divine glory and sovereignty into which Christ, as the Incarnate Son, entered at His Ascension, and the permanent enjoyment of which is signified by His Session. It is as King that Christ is also Priest, it is as seated on the Throne that He intercedes. He of whom it is written, *He ever liveth to make intercession for us*, said of Himself, *I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.* The statements are mutually exclusive, if we allow ourselves to think of the Intercession as a ministry of supplication such as Christ exercised when He was on earth : but when we bring our thought of the Intercession into line with that of the Session at the right hand of God, the difficulty disappears. "He pleads by His Presence on the Father's Throne."

Again, if the Session of our Lord signifies, as I am persuaded that it does, the cessation of propitiatory offering, we may not think of the Intercession as a continual process of propitiation.

Professor Sanday, writing with reference to a particular conception of our Lord's sacrifice, says :—

> *The only question which it seems to me can rightly be raised in regard to it is whether it sufficiently corresponds to what is commonly understood by sacrifice, and whether it has sufficient warrant in the language of the New Testament. I confess to some reluctance to reading back the ideas of succeeding centuries into the New Testament. . . . The development which begins in the second century ends in the state of things before the Reformation.* (*The Conception of Priesthood*, p. 88. Ed. 1899.)

The particular conception in view satisfied, in Professor Sanday's judgment, the conditions. I only quote his words here as the best expression that I know of the kind of attitude which causes me to dislike any language which suggests that our Lord is now engaged in the work of propitiatory offering. It seems to me that not the least important significance of the New Testament statements of the Heavenly Session is that propitiation is a thing which is over and done with. The argument of the New Testament is not merely that there is remission of sins because Christ offered Himself once for all: it is also that there is no more offering for sin because there is remission (comp. Heb. x. 18).

And in this connexion it is a fact worthy of notice that writers who speak of *the everliving sacrifice* or *the abiding heavenly sacrifice*, and identify our Lord's Offering and His Intercession, either seem to make no attempt to interpret the specific significance of the Heavenly Session, or regard the idea that it includes the significance of rest as precarious.

I will not trespass further upon the contents of the pages which follow. But I cannot bring these prefatory remarks to a close without expressing my gratitude and indebtedness to Professor Swete, Professor Burkitt and Dr. Sinker for valued criticisms and suggestions.

ARTHUR J. TAIT.

RIDLEY HALL, CAMBRIDGE.
The Feast of the Ascension, 1912.

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Part I

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SESSION IN HOLY SCRIPTURE, CREEDS AND FORMULARIES

THE HEAVENLY SESSION OF OUR LORD

CHAPTER I

THE STATEMENT IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

FOR the source of the New Testament doctrine of our Lord's Session at the right hand of the Father we must look to Old Testament prophecy. The progressive character of revelation imposes upon us the obligation of approaching the later stages by way of the earlier, and of finding in the foreshadowings of type and prophecy the steps towards the understanding of the fuller truth. The metaphor of a shadow which is applied to the Law by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews implies not merely that the Law can only be rightly understood in the light of the Gospel, but also that men were prepared for the reception of the Gospel by the dispensation of the Law. That coming events cast their shadow before them is as true of God's revelation of Himself through the Spirit, as of His working in Providence. The doctrine of the Heavenly Session of our Lord is no exception to this general rule. Like every other part of the New Testament revelation, it has its foreshadowings in the Old Testament. Those foreshadowings are to be found in the application of the idea of session to the conception of Jehovah, and still more in the description which is given in Ps. cx. of the Messianic King.

But before we set ourselves to the study of these passages it will be well for us to gather out of the Old Testament the ideas which were associated with the word ישב in its general use.

The first and most obvious idea of the word is that of rest, repose, cessation from labour. Thus Abraham *sat in the tent door in the heat of the day* (Gen. xviii. 1). Lot *at even sat in the gate of Sodom* (Gen. xix. 1). Moses at the close of his journey, when he had fled from Egypt, *sat down by a well* (Exod. ii. 15).

A second significance of the word is that of honour and dignity, as when, for example, the first-born of Pharaoh was said to sit upon his throne (Exod. ii. 5). In this case the idea of honour was doubtless contributed in the main by the son's joint occupation of the king's throne, but the actual posture of session was also significant. A similar association is to be found in the sitting of Eli upon a seat by the post of the temple (1 Sam. i. 9). It is still more marked in the account of Bathsheba's intercession with Solomon for Adonijah. *The king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself to her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a throne to be set for the king's mother; and she sat down on his right hand* (1 Kings ii. 19).[1] Again, in the Song of Deborah three classes of the people are distinguished, the magistrates, as those that *ride on white asses*, the wealthy, as those that *sit on rich carpets* (R.V.), the ordinary people, as those that *walk by the way* (Judges v. 10).

A third idea associated with the posture of session is that of the administration of justice. Moses is represented as seated for this purpose with the people standing about him.[2] Similarly the king sat on the throne of

[1] Cf. Esther iii. 1; Lc. i. 52; Apoc. iv. 4; xi. 16.
[2] Cf. Exod. xviii. 13; Num. xxxv. 12; Joshua xx. 6.

judgment.[1] And the occupation of thrones by the princes or elders was significant of more than mere honour and dignity; it was also symbolical of participation in the administration of judgment.[2]

A fourth association of the word is that of sovereignty, kingship. The king was the one who sat on the throne, and succession was normally spoken of as sitting upon the king's throne.[3]

In addition to these conceptions which attached themselves to the word יָשַׁב when it properly signified literal and actual session, we must notice a wider, and much more frequent use of the word, according to which it bore the significance of dwelling or abiding. In this sense the word connotes sometimes temporary dwelling in a place, as when the Israelites are said to have *abode in Kadesh* (Num. xx. 1); at other times, permanent abiding, as when Jeremiah assured the remnant of the people, who were left in Judæa after the destruction of Jerusalem, that they would have the Divine protection and help if they would still *abide* in the land (Jer. xlii. 10).[4] It is also used of a continuous moral condition, as in the phrases *them that sit in darkness* (Isa. xlii. 7), and *they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death* (Isa. ix. 2).

We pass now to an inquiry into the meaning of the word when it is used to describe Divine action or condition.

It signifies, in the first place, sovereignty. It is so used by the prophet Micaiah in his announcement to Ahab that the projected attack upon Ramoth-Gilead was part of the counsel of God for the king's punishment. The account of his vision begins with the words:

[1] Cf. Prov. xx. 8. [2] Cf. Esther iii. 1; Lc. i. 52.
[3] Cf. 1 Kings i. 13; xxii. 10.
[4] Comp. Ps. lxi. 7; cxxv. 1.

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left (1 Kings xxii. 19 ; 2 Chron. xviii. 18).

In the second Psalm which depicts the exercise of the Divine sovereignty over the kings of the earth, the LORD is described as *he that sitteth in the heavens* (v. 4). In the twenty-ninth Psalm, the subject is the manifestation of Divine sovereignty in Nature as constituting a claim upon the worship of man and as providing the people of the LORD with a ground of confidence in His providential care of them. The LORD is represented in this Psalm as seated in sovereignty over the forces of Nature.

The LORD *sat as king at the Flood ; yea, the* LORD *sitteth as king for ever* (ver. 10).

In the forty-seventh Psalm the sovereignty of the LORD is set forth, in His relation to the peoples of the earth. *God reigneth over the Nations : God sitteth upon his holy throne* (ver. 8).

The one hundred and tenth Psalm contains the Messianic prophecy which is the principal source of the statement of our Lord's Session as found in the New Testament.

The LORD *saith unto my lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool* (ver. 1).

The significance of the words in their bearing upon the New Testament doctrine is reserved for later treatment : attention is called to it now as one of the chief passages in the Old Testament which connect the idea of the Divine Session with that of sovereignty.

The same conception is found in the writings of the Prophets in such passages as, *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple*

(Isa. vi. 1) ; but its occurrence is not so frequent as in the Psalms.

The idea of sovereignty is also present in the conception of God as sitting upon the cherubim in the Holy of Holies which finds expression in such passages as :

The people sent to Shiloh, and they brought thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts which sitteth upon the Cherubim (1 Sam. iv. 4) [1], and, *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock ; thou that sittest upon the Cherubim, shine forth* (Ps. lxxx. 1).[2]

In these passages the ruling idea is not that of majesty and glory so much as that of God's presence amongst His own people as their Sovereign, Guide and Protector.[3]

The second association of the idea of session, as used in the Old Testament to describe the Divine action or condition, is that of the ministration of judgment. It is found, for example, in the following words of the ninth Psalm, which is a hymn of praise for the righteous judgments of the LORD :

Thou hast maintained my right and my cause ; thou satest in the throne judging righteously (ver. 4). *The* LORD *sitteth as king for ever : he hath prepared his throne for judgment* (ver. 7).

As an instance of the same use of the word in the writings of the prophets, Joel's anticipation of God's judgment upon the enemies of His people should be noticed.

Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat : for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about (Joel iii. 12).

[1] Comp. 2 Sam. vi. 2. [2] Comp. Ps. xcix. 1.
[3] Comp. Exod. xxv. 22.

It may be remarked here that in Old Testament theology the Divine Session is always connected with the administrative or redemptive work of God. It is not that the idea of honour and dignity is ever absent, but that the Divine Session is always brought into specific relationship to Divine activity. It is as the Sovereign of the universe, or as the Judge of the nations, or as the Protector of His people that God is represented as seated. And this phenomenon is sufficient to justify, if justification is needed, the method of approaching the New Testament doctrine of the Session of our Lord by way of the Old Testament. It puts us on our guard against the conception that session necessarily signifies inactivity. We shall be prepared to find that the doctrine of our Lord's Session includes the idea of ministerial activity.

The immediate source of the New Testament conception of the Session of our Lord was undoubtedly Psalm cx. Christ Himself claimed the words of the opening verse as Messianic in their reference; and the claim is recorded in each of the Synoptic Gospels.[1] The Psalm is also quoted in the same connexion by St. Peter,[2] St. Paul,[3] and by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.[4]

The significance of the phrase, *Sit thou at my right hand*, appears to be threefold.

(1) Rest. This is suggested by the words *Until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet*. The conception is that of the withdrawal of the king from personal participation in the conflict with his enemies, and of their subjection by God Himself. It is remarkable that this idea of rest from conflict has received so little attention from

[1] See Mt. xxii. 44; Mc. xii. 36; Lc. xx. 42; comp. Mt. xxvi. 64.
[2] Acts ii. 34. Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 22. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 25.
[4] Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 7, 21; x. 12 f. Comp. i. 3.

Christian writers. Indeed, the prevailing interpretation has suggested something quite different.[1] Christ is generally represented as engaged in the subjection of the enemies of God, and only ceasing His labours when all opposition has been overcome, and He has presented the kingdom to the Father. But the language of the Psalm and St. Paul's use of it in 1 Cor. xv. 25 rather suggest that Christ has in some sense withdrawn from the conflict, and awaits the enjoyment of the promised inheritance. And in this case the fulfilment would be found in the withdrawal of Christ's bodily presence from the earth, while the inheritance which belongs to Him as the Son of man is being prepared for Him.

(2) Honour. This is suggested by the posture of session, and by the position assigned to the king at the right hand of God.[2]

(3) Sovereignty, to be realized in its completeness after

[1] See below, p. 86.

[2] *The Right Hand of God*, when used in the Old Testament to indicate position occupied, is a metaphorical expression signifying (1) Honour. Comp. 1 Kings ii. 19; Ps. xlv. 9; Mt. xxv. 33. (2) Bliss. Comp. Ps. xvi. 11. (3) Authority. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 2; Pss. xlviii. 10; lxxvii. 10. (4) Power. Comp. Pss. xvii. 7; xviii. 35; xx. 6; xxi. 8; lxv. 5; lxxiv. 11; xcviii. 1; cxviii. 15 f.; Is. xlviii. 13; lxii. 8.

In the one hundred and tenth Psalm it should be noticed that the king is at the right hand of the LORD for the purpose of participating in His power, and the LORD is at the right hand of the king for the purpose of imparting power. Comp. Athan., *Adv. Arian.*, i. 61.

The Rabbinic interpretation laid emphasis on the conception of honour. In the Midrash on Psalm xviii. 36 (35 in the A.V.) Abraham is represented as being grieved because his descendant (*the son of my son*) sits on the right hand, whereas he himself is on the left hand. The passage is interesting because of its specific application of Psalm cx. 1 to the Messiah, and also because of the interpretation of the language of the verse. Comp. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii, p. 721. Ed. 1900.

the final subjection of the king's enemies, but entered upon when the Session begins (comp. ver. 2). This is also the significance which is attached to session in one of Zechariah's Messianic predictions. *The man whose name is the Branch . . . shall sit and rule upon his throne* (Zech. vi. 12 f.). The passage continues: *And he shall be* (or *there shall be*) *a priest upon his throne.* It is not unreasonable to suppose that Zechariah had the language of the Psalm in mind; but whether that was so or not, it is worthy of note that in each passage the two ideas of sovereignty and priesthood are blended. The portraiture is that of a priest seated on the throne of sovereignty, a portraiture which had been foreshadowed by the story of Melchizedek, and was afterwards interpreted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

When we turn to the New Testament, we find that our Lord claimed the 110th Psalm as referring to Himself. He not only set the seal of His authority on its Messianic character, but also, in His references to His future manifestation, He applied the language of the Psalm to Himself. *In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory* (Mt. xix. 28). *Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power* (Mt. xxvi. 64; Mc. xiv. 62).[1]

In this use of the language by our Lord we notice that the Session is predicated of *the Son of man.* It belongs essentially, in the realm of thought, to that nature according to which Christ is inferior to the Father. The remembrance of this would have saved the Arians, on the one hand, from using the Session as an argument for their erroneous conception of our Lord's Divinity,[2] and Cyril of Jerusalem, on the other hand, from refusing to allow

[1] Comp. Lc. xxii. 69. [2] See below, p. 58.

that our Lord's Session represented an experience which had a beginning in time.[1]

Further, the significance of the Session, as referred to by our Lord, is that of sovereignty. In the earlier reference it is directly stated, and in the later one, it is clearly implied.

Once again, though the Session was predicated of *the Son of man*, it was accepted both by Christ and the members of the Sanhedrin as a claim to Divine Sonship.

> *Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, ye say that I am* (Lc. xxii. 69 f.).

The Session, therefore, is to be associated in thought with the Deity as well as with the humanity of Christ. He sits as *the Son of man*, at the right hand of God, because, and only because, He is also *the Son of God*. Through the hypostatic union equality and inferiority meet in the one person. Whatever of equality with the Father is betokened by the Session, that belongs to Christ as *the Son of God*; whatever of inferiority may be associated with the conception, that belongs to Him as *the Son of man*.

The only other reference to the Session which the Gospels contain is found in the closing section of the second Gospel.

> *So then the Lord Jesus after he had spoken unto them was received up into heaven, and sat down*[2] *at the right hand of God* (Mc. xvi. 19 f.)

[1] See below, p. 59.

[2] Ἐκάθισεν, *He took His seat.* So in Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12. Comp. Eph. i. 20; Apoc. iii. 21. The aorist tense signifies the act of entrance upon the glorified state. Κεκάθικεν is found in Heb. xii. 2, καθήμενος in Col. iii. 1; Apoc. iv. 9 ff. These indi-

The conception is not that of inactivity but of the sovereign exercise of Divine power.

> *They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that followed.*

From one point of view the words were an assertion of permanent withdrawal, from another, they were the assertion of continued presence. In one connexion, they imply cessation from labour, in another they assert unceasing activity. As man, Christ had withdrawn His presence, and ceased His earthly ministry: as God, He was still with His disciples, manifesting His sovereign power.

The references to the Session in St. Paul's writings exhibit various aspects of its practical bearing upon Christian life. The theological significance is not ignored, but it is consistently brought into relation to the realized redemptive work of our Lord.

> *It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* (Rom. viii. 33 ff.).

The Session, as being the proof of Christ's participation in the Father's glory and as determining the manner of His intercession, is a source of assurance for the believer in the matter of his acceptance with God. It is a pledge to him of his freedom from condemnation.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul refers twice to the subject.

In the first chapter, the Exaltation of Christ is again set

cate the state which results from the initial act. See Bp. Westcott's comments on Heb. i. 3; x. 12.

forth as the source of assurance for the believer. But the connexion is different. The Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ are now mentioned as illustrations of that Divine power which is for the believer's use, as he seeks to walk worthily of his calling, and to prepare himself for his glorious destiny![1]

In the second chapter, mention is made of the Session in connexion with the mystical union between Christ and the believer.[2] The passage has for its purpose the exaltation of Divine grace; and to this end St. Paul reminds his readers of what they had been in their natural condition, and of what they had become, both in nature and privilege, through the mercy of God. The old idea of heaven as primarily a locality and an inheritance awaiting us in the future, led many to regard St. Paul's words in this passage as the language either of type or of anticipation and hope.[3] But these interpretations do not fit in well with the context, which refers to realized change and blessing. St. Paul has in view the spiritual union of Christ and the believer. It is true that the Resurrection and Session of Christ are types of the spiritual life, and anticipations of the believer's destiny, but they are not that alone. They must also be interpreted in the light of St. Paul's teaching about the Church.[4] Christ is the Head, and the Church is His Body; Christ is the Body, and the believer is the member. It is as such that Christ is seated in *the heavenly places*: and for him who has become one spirit with Christ,[5] there is already a realization, in part, of heavenly session with Christ,[6] which is the earnest of the glory which is to be hereafter. The Kingdom of God is even now

[1] Eph. i. 19 ff.
[2] Eph. ii. 6.
[3] See below, pp. 227 ff.
[4] Comp., e.g., Eph. i. 23; ii. 20 ff.; iii. 15 f.
[5] Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 17; Eph. ii. 22.
[6] Comp. Jo. xiv. 3.

within us, eternal life is even now our possession, *the heavenly places* are even now our abode.

In the Epistle to the Colossians the same conception is expressed in different terms and for a different purpose.

> *If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God* (Col. iii. 1 ff.).

In the former passage the governing idea was that of gratitude for the grace of God, Who had bestowed so great privilege and blessing; here it is that of the necessity of response to the obligations which the blessing involves. The life of *the heavenly places* must be exhibited in those who claim to be seated there with Christ.

In the Epistle to the Philippians the Exaltation of Christ is stated without explicit reference to the Session.[1] The context is the great Christological passage of the second chapter. The language used has an important bearing upon the doctrine of the Session, inasmuch as Christ's Exaltation is clearly regarded as the reward of His obedience as man. Viewed in this light, the Exaltation is part of the sacrifice which was involved in the Incarnation, and, as such, is used here by St. Paul as an incentive to unselfishness.

We have left until the close of our survey of St. Paul's teaching the difficult passage in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The words are :—

> *Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.*

[1] See ch. ii. 9 ff.

. . . *And when all things shall have been subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all* (1 Cor. xv. 24 ff.).

The reference of the words, when studied in connexion with the New Testament teaching as a whole, is seen to be to the Messianic and dispensational sovereignty which was committed to Christ as the Son of man.[1] Christ, as the Incarnate Son, took His seat on the Father's Throne as the reward of His obedience [2] and victory.[3] To Him, as such, all authority has been given. At His name every knee is to bow, *of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;* and every tongue is *to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.*

This, however, is not the end, but rather a means to an end, which is *the glory of God the Father.*[4] The mediated revelation and government through the Incarnate Son are to give place eventually to the immediate vision and sovereignty of God. The Session of Christ, regarded in this light, is to issue in the transference of the kingdom to the Father, when the mediated sovereignty has been fully realized through the subjection of all things to Christ. And then Christ, as the Head of the Church, and as summing up all things in Himself, will be subject to the Father (thus manifesting the final accomplishment of the work which He came to earth to accomplish), that God (i.e. the Godhead, as contrasted with the Incarnate Son) may be all in all.

If, as it seems reasonable to believe, St. Paul had in his mind the language of the eighth Psalm as well as that of the hundred and tenth this explanation of the delivery of

[1] Comp. Mt. xxviii. 18; Jo. v. 27. [2] Cf. Phil. ii. 9.
[3] Apoc. iii, 21. [4] Comp. Jo. xiv. 13; Phil. ii. 11.

the kingdom and the final subjection of the Son receives further confirmation. For in the Epistle to the Hebrews the destined subjection of all things to Christ is alluded to as the realization of that sovereignty which the Psalmist ascribes to man.[1] And if Christ's manifested sovereignty is to be the fulfilment of the destiny set before man, then St. Paul's language presents no difficulty. It is God who alone wields absolute sovereignty, and not man, even though he be represented by Christ. If the manifestation and exercise of the sovereignty is committed to Christ as man, it can only be a dispensational sovereignty to be delivered up eventually by Him to the Father.

The doctrinal significance of our Lord's Session finds its fullest expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the subject is presented in its relationship (1) to the heavenly glory of Christ; (2) to the High-Priesthood of Christ. Both of these conceptions appear to have been present in the mind of the writer whenever he referred to the subject, but the emphasis varies.

In the opening chapter (Heb. i. 3) the Session is regarded as the consequence (and evidence) of the completion of the propitiatory work, and as the realization of the Messiah's glorious destiny. The phrase *καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ κ.τ.λ.* puts the Session into the clearest possible relationship to the work of propitiation.[2] The aorist tenses signify the completion of one state or condition and the entrance upon another.[3]

[1] See Heb. ii. 8. [2] Comp. ch. x. 12.

[3] The Vulgate, through representing ποιησάμενος by *faciens*, has introduced considerable confusion into Western exegesis of the passage. The result is that it is not infrequently explained as referring to the Atonement as realized in man's experience as well as provided by God through Christ, and the emphasis is laid on the continuous application of Christ's grace through Word and Sacrament rather than on the completed sacrifice through

The primary import of the passage, however, associates the Session with the conception of Christ's heavenly glory. By a series of quotations from the Old Testament the writer of the Epistle sets forth the glory of the Messiah in contrast with that of the angels, and says that Christ *took His seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, as the realization of that more glorious inheritance which is there predicted of Him.

The eighth chapter forms part of the argument in which the writer asserts the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to that of the Levitical Order.

Christ is *the surety of a better covenant*, His priesthood is unending, He is sinless and exalted above the heavens, His sacrifice consisted of Himself, and it was one sacrifice offered once for all.[1] These points of superiority are stated in detail and then summed up in the words :—

> *Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this ; we have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man* (Heb. viii. 1 ff.).

The Session is the declaration of Christ's heavenly glory, of the permanence of His priesthood, of the completeness of His propitiatory work, and of the scene of His consequent priestly ministration.

A question arises in this connexion as to the interpretation of the words ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσενέγκῃ (Heb. viii. 3). The view has been held that the writer here asserts a continuance of Christ's propitiatory offering. It is doubtful, however, whether

which the supply of grace was rendered available (comp. below, pp. 106 ff.).

[1] See ch. vii. 11 ff.

the tense of προσενέγκῃ can bear this interpretation.[1] The passage, moreover, must be explained in the light of the plain declarations, which both precede and follow it, of the completeness of Christ's propitiatory work.[2] It is hardly credible that the writer could have intended to modify these dogmatic assertions, without any explanation of the apparent inconsistency.

The Greek is ambiguous, and can be translated either by *it is necessary*, or by *it was necessary*. Some authorities have preferred the latter translation, regarding it as required by the context.[3] If the former is retained, it seems best to treat the words as the statement of principle in terms of time. The assertion is, not that Christ should be always offering, but that He should be always an offerer. This necessity was met by the once offered sacrifice, and the Session is the declaration that this part of the priestly work of Christ has been accomplished.[4]

In the tenth chapter, the writer deals once again with the superiority of Christ's propitiatory work to that of the Levitical Priesthood.

> *Every priest indeed standeth day by day offering oftentimes the same sacrifices the which can never take away sins: but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified . . . where remission . . . is, there is no more offering for sin* (Heb. x. 11 ff.).

That the significance of the Session in this passage is

[1] Comp. προσφέρῃ, ix. 25. See Bp. Westcott, *ad loc.*, and E. C. Wickham (*Westminster Commentaries*).

[2] Cf. Heb. vii. 27; ix. 12 ff., 25 ff.; x. 12.

[3] See below, pp. 49 f.

[4] Comp. x. 12.

primarily that of cessation from offering, is clearly indicated by the marked contrast betwen ἕστηκεν and ἐκάθισεν ;[1] also by the declaration, repeated four times in the context, of the completeness and sufficiency of the one offering ; and lastly by the juxtaposition of προσενέγκας and ἐκάθισεν.

It is at first sight surprising that the history of the Western interpretation of the passage, until the period of the Reformation, shows so little evidence of the recognition of this point ; but the phenomenon can be easily accounted for. There was first of all the misleading translation of the Vulgate.[2] As this will be commented upon in a later chapter, it will suffice here merely to call attention to the fact. Expositors whose knowledge of the passage depended on the words *Hic autem unam pro peccatis offerens hostiam in sempiternum sedit* could hardly be expected to recognize the Session as the evidence of completed propitiation.[3]

But in addition to this, there was a tendency to confuse the propitiatory offering of Christ with His mediatorial work in heaven. The fact of the continuous intercession gave rise to the conception of an *abiding offering*.

This failure to distinguish between the two conceptions has also led to defective teaching in the opposite direction. There have been those who have so emphasized the doctrine of the *finished work* of Christ, as to ignore the doctrine of the unending Priesthood.

Both of these mistakes have arisen from ignoring one or other of the two key notes which the Epistle to the

[1] See E. C. Wickham, *ad loc.* (*Westminster Commentaries*).

[2] See below, pp. 106 ff.

[3] In this connexion it is interesting to notice the translation of the passage in the Douay Bible, *but this man offering one sacrifice for sins, for ever sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Hebrews provides for a right understanding of the priestly work of Christ. On the one hand, the propitiatory sacrifice is represented as having been offered once for all, in contrast with the repeated acts of offering of the Levitical Priesthood. On the other hand, the priestly intercession of Christ is represented as unending, in contrast with the intercession of the Levitical priests, which was interrupted by death. And these two points of contrast between the priestly work of Christ and that of the Levitical priests are summed up in the general contrast between the Priesthood which was after the Order of Melchizedek and that which was after the Order of Aaron. It is as King that Christ is also Priest: it is as seated on the Throne that He intercedes. In the words of Bishop Westcott, *the modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven His Passion, "offering His blood" on behalf of men, has no foundation in the Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work. He pleads, as older writers truly expressed the thought, by His Presence on the Father's Throne.*[1]

But it is not only in relation to the propitiatory offering that session is here predicated of our Lord. The words *on the right hand of God* and *from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet,* associate Christ's Session also with the cessation of the conflict which He had waged on earth, and His entrance upon the glorious rest and sovereignty which He had inherited as the Son of man.

In the twelfth chapter this last conception reappears, in a different context. Christ is depicted as the forerunner in the race that is set before men; He is the example and inspiration for all who follow. He kept

[1] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 230.

His eyes fixed stedfastly on the goal, and in the power of that glorious hope He endured the cross; and now as Victor He has taken His seat on the right hand of the throne of God, His labours over, His triumph won (Heb. xii. 2). In the previous passage the glory of Christ is the ground of confidence in the efficacy of His priestly work: here it is the source of inspiration for the conflict of life.

In the first Epistle of St. Peter there is one reference to Christ's position at the right hand of God (1 Pet. iii. 22 f.). The Session itself is not mentioned, but attention is concentrated, as in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, on the fact of His being at the right hand.

The context seems to attach a three-fold significance to the conception. In the first place, it is a declaration of the unending life and power of Jesus Christ, for the saving power of Baptism is attributed to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, and is at the right hand of God. In the second place, it is a declaration of the permanent withdrawal of Christ's visible presence. This is implied by the phrase *πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν*. Christ rose from the dead, He went to heaven, He is at the right hand of God. In the third place, it is a declaration of the sovereignty of Christ. This is found in the closing words of the verse, *ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων*.

In the Apocalypse, the conception of the Session as the reward of victory reappears, but with the addition of a new feature. Christ's participation in His Father's Throne is the earnest of the glorious inheritance which awaits the victorious disciple.

> *He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in his throne* (Apoc. iii. 21).

The significance of this passage is ignored by a great many of the earlier writers who regard Christ's Session on the Father's Throne as a proof of His Deity. But it obviously demands explanation, if the argument is to stop short of the deification of man. The necessity was perceived by the Abbot Rupert of Deutz, who explains the reference to man's session with Christ by the words *non ut exaequetur Divinitati, sed ut consocietur aeternitati.*[1]

G. C. Knapp makes use of the passage to prove that Christ's Session does not signify equality with the Father, but merely the Divine honour which was granted to Him as man.[2] But this comment errs in the opposite direction, inasmuch as it ignores the significance of participation in the Father's Throne. And the earlier writers were doubtless correct in regarding such a conception as incompatible with mere humanity. Honour for the Incarnate Son it assuredly does signify, but the honour is of such a kind that it can only be predicated of Him who is the Son of God as well as the Son of man. Man is nowhere promised such honour apart from Christ. It is only in Christ that he can enjoy it, and that is only possible because Christ has made Himself one with man. Hence it comes that while Christ's Session with the Father implies His identity of nature with the Father, the believer's session with Christ implies Christ's participation in the nature of man.

Thus Ambrose writes :—

Non ergo sedimus, sed in Christo consedimus qui solus sedet ad dexteram Dei Filius hominis.[3]

[1] Migne, *P.L.* clxix. 902. See below, p. 60.
[2] *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. pp. 45 f.
[3] *Ep.* lxxvi. 8; Migne, *P.L.* xvi. 1261.

In other words, our session is not the same as Christ's. In His case session is original; in ours it is derived.[1]

There are two passages in the New Testament where Christ is depicted in His heavenly glory as *standing*. The one is found in the record of St. Stephen's vision at the time of his martyrdom, the other in the record of St. John's vision in the Isle of Patmos (Acts vii. 55 f.; Apoc. v. 6). These divergences from the normal usage present no difficulty, if it is remembered that the statements of the Session in the dogmatic language of the New Testament can only be metaphorical. But on the other hand such divergences cannot be allowed to modify the plain teaching of the dogmatic language. Metaphor does not lose its significance because it is metaphor; and dogmatic statement does not depend for its interpretation upon the literal meaning of the language of vision or apocalypse.[2]

There is no necessity, therefore, to attempt to bring these two passages, in respect of their form, into line with the normal usage of the New Testament: we are concerned only with their inner meaning.

In the case of St. Stephen's vision, the posture of standing has been generally interpreted as signifying succour and assistance. The first martyr was permitted to see the Saviour in the attitude which would afford him the most help and encouragement. And the record of the vision stands for all time as the source of inspiration and comfort for all those who are called upon to suffer for Christ's sake.[3]

[1] Comp. *De Fide*, v. 14. Ibid., 684 f.

[2] See below, p. 122.

[3] Comp. *O blessed Jesus, Who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for Thee.* Collect for St. Stephen's Day.

Tibi primum reseratae caeli patent Januae;

The vision recorded in the Apocalypse is that of a Lamb standing in the midst of the throne *as though it had been slain* (Apoc. v. 6). It is a scene of triumph and victory. The marks of the sacrifice remain, but the sacrifice itself is over, and its purpose has been achieved. *Thou wast slain and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation* (ver. 9). The Lamb is depicted as the object of worship on the part of the *living creatures*, and *the elders*, and the assembled angelic host. Any conception of continuous propitiation would be entirely alien to the spirit of the vision.

The Lamb stands in the midst of the throne, which He shares with God (Apoc. xxii. 1), neither as priest nor as victim, but as victorious Redeemer through whom alone the sovereign purpose of God was to find its accomplishment.

Jesum vides potestate cui pugnes strenue ;
Stans cum Patris majestate tecum est assidue.
Brev. Brach.
Neale, *Hymni Ecclesiae*, p. 82.

See as Jewish foes invade thee,
See how Jesus stands to aid thee ;
Stands to guard His champion's death.
Neale, *Mediaeval Hymns*, p. 136.

Neale adds the following note : *Our Lord's standing at the right Hand of the Father, here and here only, as a Friend to sympathize, as a Champion to help, is continually dwelt on by mediaeval writers.*

CHAPTER II

THE STATEMENT IN CREEDS AND FORMULARIES

THE statement of the Session did not have a place in all the Eastern forms of the Creed. It was absent from the Creed which Eusebius of Caesarea presented, as an old-established formulary of his Church, to the Council of Nicaea; nor was it included in the Creed which was issued by the Council. Arius' Creed which he presented to the Emperor Constantine did not contain it; and it is omitted in the form which is found in the *Ecthesis* of Athanasius.[1]

The most natural explanation of the omission is that the statement of the Ascension was regarded as embracing the idea of the Session, and that no particular importance was attached to the Session in itself.

It was the conflict with Arianism which brought the doctrine into prominence. In that controversy the fact of the Session was put forward, on the one hand, as evidence of the inferiority of the Son to the Father, partly because the position *at the right hand*, and the fact that the Father is said to have invited the Son to occupy it were supposed to betoken inferiority, and partly because of St. Paul's statement that the Session was to be followed

[1] See Hahn, *Bibliothek*, p. 264. But in the *Libellum de Incarnatione*, attributed to Athanasius, a Creed is recited which contains the clause καθήμενος ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς, *ibid.* p. 266.

by subjection.[1] It was urged, on the other hand, as one of the main arguments against the Arian conception, on the ground that the position involved coequality with the Father in both nature and authority.

But this raises again the question as to why there is no statement of the Session either in Arius' Creed, or in the Creed of Nicaea. The fact that the doctrine of the Session did not assume any great importance until the Arian controversy might account for the omission of any reference to it in the Creed of Caesarea, but it would equally suggest the inclusion of a reference to it in formularies which were drawn up in relation to that controversy.

A natural answer to the question would be that if disputants on each side of the controversy claimed the Session as supporting their position, neither side would be zealous about its inclusion in a statement of the Faith. But this answer is rendered improbable by the fact that in the opening stage of the conflict there were other and more important conceptions and phrases around which the battle raged, and on which the issue hung. It was in the subsequent period that the doctrine of the Session came into prominence.

It seems more reasonable to suppose that the omission was natural and accidental; that it merely represented a traditional usage of the East; and that the inclusion of a reference to the Session was never so much as contemplated either by Arius or by the Nicene Fathers.

It must not be supposed, however, that the statement of the Session was entirely absent from the earlier Eastern Creeds. It was included in the Creed of Jerusalem, as given in Cyril's catechetical lectures,[2] and in the Creed

[1] See 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff.

[2] Comp. *Cat.* xiv. 27; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxiii. 860.
It is interesting to notice that in the revision of the Jerusalem

which is found in the writings of Pseudo-Gregory Thaumaturgus.[1] And in a letter of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, which is preserved by Theodoret,[2] we have evidence that it formed part of the Alexandrine Confession.[3] In that letter the Bishop gives what is apparently the Creed of his own Church, for he introduces it with the words πιστεύομεν ὡς τῇ ἀποστολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ δοκεῖ, and at the close of the summary (which is interspersed with comments of his own) he refers to the contents as *the apostolic dogmas of the Church.*

The order in which he places the various Articles of the Faith suggests that he was reciting a primitive Baptismal Creed which had been enlarged by the addition of other clauses. For after statement of belief in *one unbegotten Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, one Holy Spirit, one only Catholic Church,* he continues :—

> *With these things we know the resurrection from the dead of which our Lord Jesus Christ has become the firstfruits . . . who in the consummation of the ages visited the race of men for the putting away of sins, was crucified and died . . . rose again from the dead, was taken up to the heavens, is seated at the right hand of majesty : these things we teach ; these things we preach ;*

Creed, which seems to have taken place in the middle of the fourth century, for the purpose of bringing it into line with Nicene phraseology, καθίσαντα was changed into καθεζόμενον. This was doubtless due to Cyril's insistence on the Session as indicating Christ's return to His eternal glory rather than His entrance as man into a new dignity. See below, pp. 59 ff.

[1] Comp. Hahn, pp. 280–285.

[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 3 ; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 904 ff.

[3] Comp. also the *Libellum de Incarnatione* attributed to Athanasius. Opera, Tom. ii., p. 2. Ed. Montfaucon, Paris, 1698.

these are the apostolic dogmas of the Church, for which we also cheerfully encounter death.[1]

The order is peculiar and gives the idea of a supplemented Baptismal Creed; but, whatever be the true explanation of that point, the evidence is sufficient for maintaining that the fact of the Session had a place in the Creed of the Alexandrine Church before the rise of the Arian controversy.

By the middle of the fourth century, the statement of the Session seems to have become an integral part of all Eastern Creeds, whether Orthodox or Arian. It is found in the several Creeds of Antioch,[2] in a Baptismal formulary contained in *The Apostolical Constitutions*, in the Creed of Sirmium, in the two Creeds given by Epiphanius in his *Ancoratus*, in the Creed of the Council of Constantinople, and in the *Definitio Fidei* which was put forth by the Council of Chalcedon.

This declaration,[3] in which the Fathers of Chalcedon explained at length the doctrine of the Incarnation in opposition to the errors both of Nestorius and of Eutyches, was not a Creed; but it is important for our present purpose because it embodies a recital of the Creed of Nicaea which differs in several particulars from the Creed as set forth by that Council. The differences consist almost entirely of additions, and amongst them is a statement of the Session.[4]

[1] *Theod. et Evag. Hist. Eccl.*, p. 20. Ed. Cantab., 1720.

[2] With one exception. It is missing from a Creed of Antioch which is given by Cassian, *De Incarn.*, vi. 3; Migne, *P.L.*, l. 144.

[3] See Heurtley, *De Fide et symbolo*, pp. 23 ff.

[4] The one omission is that of the phrase τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ. The other additional phrases and clauses are as follows: (κατελθόντα) ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν—(σαρκωθέντα) ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου—σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ

It was not the first time that divergence from the Original had appeared in quotations of the Creed. A comparison of the forms found in the writings of Athanasius, Theodoret, and Gelasius Cyzicenus brings to light a strange notion of accuracy in the matter of quotation.

The following table exhibits the differences between these three forms.

Athanasius.[1]	Theodoret.[2]	Gelasius Cyzicenus.[3]
πάντων ὁρατῶν τε	(= Ath.)	ὁρατῶν τε πάντων
εἰς τὸν ἕνα K. Ιησ.	εἰς ἕνα K. Ιησ.	(= Theod.)
τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς	τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ	(= Theod.)
—	—	ταφέντα
—	—	καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Πατρός
ἐρχόμενον	(= Ath.)	πάλιν ἐρχόμενον
εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον	εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα	εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ Πνεῦμα.

That these divergences were, in part at least, due to looseness in the treatment of *ipsissima verba* seems to be evident from the fact that Athanasius is at variance even with himself in his quotations of the Creed.

In his *Epistola ad Jovianum* he quotes the Anathemas of the Creed according to the accepted form: but in his *De Decretis Nic. Symb.* they assume a form which differs from the others not only in arrangement but also in contents by both omission and addition.

But besides inaccuracy in the matter of quotation we have also to take into account the kind of loose statement which finds an example in the language of Epiphanius, when he attributes a still more divergent

Ποντίου Πιλάτου—καὶ ταφέντα—κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς—(ἐρχόμενον) μετὰ δόξης—οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος—τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποίον.

[1] *Epist. ad Jovianum*, *c.* 3; Migne, *P.G.*, xxvi. 817.

[2] *H.E.*, i. 12; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 941.

[3] *Hist. Conc. Nic.*, ii. 26; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxv. 1308.

formulary to the Apostles and the Nicene Fathers. This may throw some light on the matter. It is obvious that he was not referring to the authorship of the Creed, but only to the doctrines which were expressed in it.

His words are :—

> *This faith was delivered from the Holy Apostles and in the Church, the Holy City, from all the holy bishops together more than three hundred and ten in number.*[1]

A similar phenomenon appears in the use of the title *The Nicene Creed*, for the Creed of Constantinople. The original Nicene Creed was inadequate in its statement of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and was displaced in general use by the later and fuller Creed which represented its doctrine and received its name.

And it is possible that in the *Definition* of Chalcedon, the phrase *the symbol of the* 318 *Fathers who met at Nicaea* was used of some current representation of the original Creed, which had added to it clauses from the Constantinopolitan formulary ; and that the language was not intended to imply an identity in the matter of the *ipsissima verba.*

We may now turn our attention to the various ways in which the fact of the Session is expressed in Eastern Creeds.

Each of the three points of view from which the fact is approached in the New Testament has its representation.[2]

In its relation to the will of the Father, and regarded as the consequence of the action of the Father, the Session is expressed by the passive aorist participle, καθεσθέντα. This is found in two of the Creeds of Antioch,[3] and in

[1] *Ancoratus, c.* 118.

[2] See above, pp. 11 ff.

[3] See Athanasius, *Epist. de Synod.*, 23, 24 ; Migne, *P.G.*,

the Baptismal formulary contained in the *Apostolical constitutions*.[1]

Regarded from the point of view of the Son's entrance upon the exalted state, the Session is expressed by the active aorist participle, *καθίσαντα*. This is found in the Creed of Jerusalem,[2] and in the longer of the two forms which are given by Epiphanius.[3]

Viewed as the continuous occupation by the Son of the exalted position, the Session is expressed by the present or perfect participle, *καθεζόμενον* or *καθήμενον*. The former is found in the revised Creed of Jerusalem,[4] in the shorter of the two forms given by Epiphanius,[5] in the Creed of Constantinople,[6] and in one of the Creeds of Antioch,[7] the latter, in the Creed of Alexandria.[8]

The change which was made in the Jerusalem Creed from *καθίσαντα* to *καθεζόμενον* is specially noteworthy. Cyril sought to overthrow the Arian interpretation of the Session by insisting on the conception that Christ did not take His seat in time, but was seated from eternity. And it was doubtless due to his influence that the expression of the fact in the Creed of his Church underwent the corresponding change.

xxvi. 721 ff.; Socrates, *H.E.*, ii. 10, 18; Migne, *P.G.*, lxvii. 204, 224; Niceph. Call., *Eccl. Hist.*, ix. 10; Migne, *P.G.*, cxlvi. 249.

[1] *c.* vii. 41.

[2] Cyril, *Cat.*, xiv. 27.

[3] *Ancoratus*, *c.* 120; Migne, *P.G.*, xliii. 236.

[4] Cyril, *Cat.* iv. 7; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxiii. 464.

[5] *Ancoratus*, *c.* 119.

[6] These three are really one and the same creed. Epiphanius quotes the revised creed of Jerusalem, and the Council of Constantinople adopted it.

[7] Cf. Niceph. Call., *Eccl. Hist.*, ix. 10; Migne, *P.G.*, cxlvi. 249.

[8] Theodoret, *H.E.*, i, 3; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 908. It is also found in the Creed of Marcellus, but that was in all probability the Creed of the Roman Church, and we are now concerned with Eastern Creeds.

We must now turn our attention to the Creeds of the Western Churches. There was a characteristic difference between the East and the West in the matter of the development of the Creed.

The Eastern emphasis on theology led naturally to considerable variety of expression, with the result that local churches were possessed each of its own formularies. Even after the issuing of the oecumenical Creed in A.D. 325, the variety did not cease, though the local formularies were revised so as to include some of the oecumenical expressions. But in the West the case was different. Not merely was there the influence of the Roman Church, acting as the centre of Western Christianity ; there was also the tendency to avoid theological speculation, and to express the facts and doctrines of the Faith in the simplest possible form.

The result was a similarity of statement which led eventually, by natural process, to the general adoption of the formulary which is now known as the Apostles' Creed. It does not come within the scope of our present purpose to trace the history of that Creed. It is sufficient to note the fact that from the earliest trace of its recital, even in its most elementary form, the statement of the Session had a place. There is no quotation of the Creed from which it is absent.[1] Its universal inclusion is a characteristic phenomenon of the Western Creed.

The form which the statement in the Latin Creed usually takes is *sedet ad dexteram* (or *in dextera*) *Patris* (or *Dei Patris Omnipotentis*) ; but there is an interesting variation in an *Expositio Fidei* of unknown authorship where the words are, *sedit in caelesti regno suo et Patris*.[2]

In the Greek forms of the Creed the expressions are

[1] See Hahn, *Bibliothek des Symbol.*, pp. 22 et seq. (Ed. 1897).
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 64, 349 ff.

καθήμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Πατρὸς (or ἐκ δεξιῶν),[1] καθεζόμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ κ.τ.λ.[2]

The earliest evidence at our disposal comes from the writings of Tertullian, from which we can gather the Creed of the Church of North Africa. There may be uncertainty as to the *ipsissima verba*, but as to the substance of the Creed there can be no doubt. From the summaries which he gives it is evident that the statement of the Session was included.

In his *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*[3] he gives one such summary containing the words :—

in *caelos ereptum sedisse ad dexteram Patris.*

Another is found in the *De Virginibus Velandis*,[4] where he appears to be quoting the language of the Creed. The words are :—

sedentem nunc ad dexteram Patris.

He gives yet another summary in his treatise *Adversus Praxean*, where the words are :—

in caelo resumptum sedere ad dexteram Patris.[5]

The variations in these three summaries should be noticed as corresponding in part to the variations found both in the Greek Formularies, and in the New Testament.

In the *Quicumque Vult* the clause runs, *sedet ad dexteram Patris*. This was an earlier form than *sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis*,[6] and indicates a date for that

[1] Epiphanius, *Haeres*, *c.* 52 ; *Psalterium Regis Ethelstan* (See Hahn's *Bibliothek*, p. 23).

[2] *Psalterium Latinum et Graecum Papae Gregorii.* See Hahn, p. 29.

[3] *c.* xiii. Ed. Bindley, p. 49.

[4] *c.* i. Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 889.

[5] *V.l.* Caelos, *c.* ii ; Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 157.

[6] Found first in a sermon of Eusebius Gallus (cent. vi.). See Heurtley, *Harm. Symb.*, p. 60.

part of the formulary which was prior to the time when the longer clause had acquired an established place in the Apostles' Creed.

We are now in a position to draw conclusions as to the place which the statement of the Session occupied in the formularies of Christendom before the Eastern Churches settled down into a condition of stagnation, and the Western Churches came under the paralyzing yoke of the Mediaeval Papacy.

We find that in the West the Heavenly Session was recognized as an Article of the Creed from the first. The short Baptismal Creeds have no bearing upon this inquiry for the simple reason that they were deliberately restricted in their contents. But from the first mention of a Creed which was intended to set forth the main Articles of the Church's belief, up to the time when the Creed became fixed in form, the Session of our Lord had an established place in the formularies of the West.

The case was different in the East. There we find only a partial recognition of the Session during the first three centuries, a phenomenon which is not confined to Creeds, for the writings of the early Eastern Fathers also contain but little reference to it. It was not until the period of the Arian Controversy that interest was aroused in its significance, and its importance came to be realized.[1]

When we turn to the Confessions of Faith which were issued by the various sections of the Reformers, we are immediately conscious of a striking departure from earlier custom. In the place of short summaries of the main facts and doctrines of the Church, we find lengthy

[1] This development of the doctrine in the East during the fourth century finds a parallel in the West in the Eucharistic controversies of the sixteenth century, when the doctrine once again came into prominence. See below, pp. 127, 177, 184.

expositions which embrace matters both of faith and practice. The change can be readily explained by the difference of circumstances. In the earlier period of creed-making the purpose in view was to provide for instruction in the fundamental doctrines, and to guard those doctrines from erroneous conceptions and expressions. In the later period order had to be restored out of an upheaval which was not merely ecclesiastical and doctrinal in character, but also social and political ; and the position of the Reformers had to be made clear in respect of a wide range of doctrinal controversy and social disorder.

This difference between the Creeds and the Reformation Confessions calls for notice now in respect of their statements of the Session. In the Creeds the simple fact is stated without any direct explanation of its significance. To a certain extent, the significance can be inferred from the context, but it remains a matter of inference. Coming as the statement of the Session necessarily does between that of the Ascension and that of the Return for Judgment, it can be taken to signify that the withdrawal of the bodily presence of our Lord was a permanent withdrawal. *He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and he shall come again. . . .*

Again, inasmuch as the statement of the Session is closely followed, in the Constantinopolitan Creed, by the assertion of the eternal nature of Christ's Kingdom, it may be inferred that the Session signifies sovereignty. But it is inference, and nothing more.

Now seeing that the doctrine of the Session had a prominent place in the Christological controversies of the fourth century, and that the expansion of the Creed was largely determined by the necessity of maintaining the truth in the face of error, it might have been expected that the statement of this Article of the Faith would have received

some corresponding development. But it did not, and the reason doubtless was that the principal errors with which it was associated were fully dealt with in the earlier clauses which set forth the doctrine of the Person of Christ.

When we come to the Reformation Confessions, we find a difference. The fact is now stated from the point of view of its doctrinal import, and its significance is no longer left to mere inference, but is carefully defined.[1]

The earlier *Confession of Basle* has the words, *Ibique sedere ad dextram, id est, in gloria, Patris,*[2] and quotes Scriptural statements of the Session to refute the doctrine of Impanation.[3]

In the later Confession the Session is regarded as the pledge of man's immortality, the proof of Christ's victory over death and sin, and the evidence of His perpetual ministry in our behalf.[4]

The Catechism of Geneva explains the Session as signifying that the Father had bestowed on Christ the sovereignty over all things in heaven and earth.[5]

The Gallican Confession insists on the permanence of Christ's humanity, which was not done away by the Resurrection and Elevation to the right hand of the Father. *Sic Christum consideramus in sua deitate, ut ipsum sua humanitate non spoliemus.*[6]

The Scotch Confession has the words *ad dextram*

[1] The English *Articles of Religion* exhibit in this respect a marked difference from the Continental Confessions. They offer no doctrine of the Session, but merely state the fact in the manner of the Creeds.

See Article IV. *He ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men at the last day.*

[2] *Confess. Eccl. Ref.*, p. 92. Ed. Niem.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 96. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 117. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 333. Comp. *Repet. Anhalt.*, *ibid.*, p. 636; *Conf. Helv. Post.*, *ibid.*, p. 485.

patris sui sedet, coronatus in regno suo, advocatus et solus mediator pro nobis.[1]

The 26th Article of the Belgic Confession treats of the Intercession of Christ and urges the fact of the Session and the power which it signifies as the proof of the qualification of Christ to be the sole mediator between God and man.

Sin autem nobis quaerendus aliquis est, qui potentia atque autoritate valeat, quis est qui tanta polleat, quanta is qui ad dextram Dei Patris sui consedit, atque omnem autoritatem habet in caelo et in terra ? [2]

In the 35th Article, which deals with the Lord's Supper, it is stated that the Session does not prevent Christ communicating Himself to us by faith. In the feast there is offered to us Christ Himself as well as the merit of His Passion.

Christus itaque semper ad dextram Patris in caelis residet, nec ideo minus se nobis per fidem communicat. Porro haec coena mensa est spiritualis, in qua Christus seipsum nobis cum omnibus bonis suis participandum offert, efficitque ut nos in illa, tam illo ipso, quam merito passionis mortisque ipsius fruamur.

The Palatine Catechism explains the significance of the Session as Christ's manifestation of Himself as the Head of the Church and Vicegerent of the Father. The benefits of the Session are stated to be Christ's infusion of heavenly gifts into His members through the Holy Spirit, and His protection of them against their enemies.[4] The Session is regarded as the evidence of the absence from earth of the Lord's body, and of our union with Him through the Holy Spirit.

[1] *Confess. Eccl. Ref.*, p. 345. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 377.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 386. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 441.

Coena Domini nobis testatur . . . nos per Spiritum Sanctum inseri Christo, qui jam secundum naturam suam humanam tantum in caelis est ad dexteram Patris, ibique vult a nobis adorari.[1]

The Later Helvetic Confession explains the Session as signifying equal participation in glory and majesty,[2] and the spiritual, as opposed to the corporal, presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper.[3]

In the *Repetitio Anhaltina* the Session is regarded as signifying the permanence of Christ's heavenly ministry as King and as Priest.

Ad regnum et ad sacerdotium perpetuo exaltatus est, factus caput ecclesiae suae, et perficiens omnia in omnibus.[4]

The *Declaratio Thoruniensis* asserts that adoration in the Eucharist is made not to the Elements or to any invisible body contained in them, but to *Christ Himself gloriously reigning at the right hand of the Father.* Christ's presence is not local or corporal or consubstantial,' but that of the mystical union which He promises in His Word, offers by symbols, and effects by the Holy Spirit.[5]

The *Greater Catechism* explains the Session as signifying the enjoyment by Christ, as Incarnate, of the highest favour of God, and the fulness of joy, glory and power, and the ministry of Christ in gathering out His Church, protecting it, overthrowing its enemies, edifying its ministers and people, and interceding for them.[6]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 448. Comp. Zwingli: *Non dicit mansit hic sed invisible reddidit corpus suum. Ibid.*, p. 28.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 485.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 522. The illustration of the Sun's presence in efficacy, but not in substance, is used. This illustration was frequently employed by the English Reformers. See below, p. 188.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 635. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 682. [6] *Ibid.*, appendix, p. 56.

Liturgical references to the Session are not numerous, although the conception of it finds frequent expression in the ascription to God the Son of joint sovereignty with God the Father.

In the Eastern Liturgies a statement of the Session is usually included in the Commemoration of our Lord's Redemptive work,[1] and less frequently in the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. In the Commemoration the significance of the Session is that of honour and glory, in the Invocation it is that of sovereignty. Thus in the Greek Liturgy of St. James the Holy Spirit is invoked as *Sharer of the throne and of the kingdom with Thee, God and Father, and Thine only begotten Son*,[2] and in that of St. Mark as *Fellow-sharer in the throne of Thy Kingdom, and of Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Saviour*.[3]

In the Byzantine Liturgies, in addition to the statement in the Commemoration, there is a reference to the Session in the prayer which accompanies the Elevation. The words, according to the present use of the Greek Orthodox Church, are :—

> *Hear us, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, out of Thy holy dwelling place, and from the throne of the glory of Thy Kingdom, and come and sanctify us, Thou that sittest above with the Father and art here invisibly present with us. . .*[4]

[1] The exceptions to the general rule in this respect are the Abyssinian Liturgy and the Liturgy of the Nestorians. The Liturgy of St. Clement and the Byzantine Liturgies (including that of St. Chrysostom according to the present use of the Greek Orthodox Church) omit the reference to the Session in the Invocation, but include it in the Commemoration.

[2] See Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, vol. i, p. 53.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 134. Compare the phrase in the closing prayer, *Mighty King and co-sharer of Thy Father's rule. Ibid.*, p. 142.

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp.392f.

The Liturgy of the Nestorians, which makes no mention of the Session in the Commemoration or Invocation, contains in the anthem of the Gospel a more comprehensive statement of it than is found anywhere else in the Liturgies. The Session is there related not merely to Christ's glory and sovereignty, but also to His work as High Priest and Representative of mankind. The words are :—

> *The Firstfruits who took our nature is gone up to the heaven of heavens on high . . . and hath opened a way for our race and made peace in the height and in the depth and made them rejoice in the day of His Ascension. He hath entered into the divine Holy of Holies to exercise His Priesthood for our salvation and hath sat down on the seat of His Kingdom at the right hand of the Father who sent Him, and hath lifted us up with Him and set us on His right hand, as it is written. Glorify and confess Him with fear and love for this grace, for He is the Head and Substance of the holy Church.*[1]

In the West the Session of our Lord received its principal liturgical expression in the two hymns, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* [2] and *Te Deum laudamus*. In the former it has the significance of sovereignty, in the latter, that of glory.

It was also commemorated in certain of the variable elements of the Liturgy, viz., the Collects and Prefaces appointed for Ascensiontide and Whitsuntide. In the Roman Sacramentaries and the Sarum Missal emphasis was laid on our Lord's exaltation as man, and on His entrance into the condition of sovereignty which enabled

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 261.

[2] The *Gloria in Excelsis* was an Eastern hymn, but its liturgical history belongs mainly to the West.

Him to send down the Holy Spirit. In the Mozarabic Liturgy the ruling idea of these special prayers was the withdrawal of our Lord's bodily presence and the substitution of His spiritual presence in the heart of the believer. Apart, however, from the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the use of which was not constant, and these variable elements, there was no reference to the Session in the pre-Reformation Liturgy.[1] It had no place in the fixed Commemoration of our Lord's Redemptive work. The Western Services can be contrasted in this respect with those of the East.

[1] The Creed is excluded from view, because we are concerned at this point only with liturgical statements of the Session.

Appendix to Part I

NOTES ON THE INTERPRETATION OF CERTAIN PASSAGES

Psalm cx.

The significance of the words *The Lord at thy right hand* (ver. 5) for the interpretation of the phrase *Sit thou on my right hand* (ver. 1) was noticed by the following writers :—

Origen. *Comment. in Matth.* xxii. 42. *Opera*, Tom. iii. 834. Ed. Par. 1740.

Didymus Alex., *Comment. in Act. Apost.* ii. 25. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxix. 1657.

Primasius, *Comment. in Epist. ad Hebr.*, i. 3. Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii. 689.

Atto, *Comment. in Epist. ad Hebr.*, i. 3. Migne, *P.L.*, cxxxiv. 731.

Acts vii. 55.

The abnormal posture here assigned to the Lord Jesus in His heavenly glory has generally attracted the attention of commentators and theologians. But there have been exceptions to the general rule, and some writers speak of Stephen's vision of Jesus *sitting* in heaven, as, for example, Priscillian (Tract. ii. *Corp. Script. Eccl. Lat.*, vol. xviii. p. 37. Ed. G. Scheppss), Calvin (Works, vol. ii. p. 286. T. & T. Clark), Cranmer (*On the Lord's Supper*, § 404, p. 376, P.S.), Hengstenberg, on Ps. cx. 1 (*Psalms*, Engl. Transl., vol. iii. p. 319. T. & T. Clark). One modern writer has claimed it as the normal usage of the New Testament (see Dr. William Milligan, *The Ascension of our Lord*, pp. 57 f.).

The interpretation usually given is that St. Stephen was permitted to see the glorified Lord in the posture which signified His help and assistance (see above, p. 23).

Comp. e.g. Ambrose, *Epist.*, lxiii. 5, 6. Migne, *P.L.*, xvi. 1190; Augustine, *Sermo*, cccxv. *Opera*, Tom. v. 1857, Ed. Par.; Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Evang.*, xxix. Migne, *P.L.*, lxxvi. 1217; Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 152.

A few writers have refused to see any special significance in the word *standing*. Beza, e.g., gives the following note: *Adstantem* = *πάροντα. Itaque inepte quaeritur quomodo hic dicatur stare qui alibi dicitur sedere. Nov. Test.* p. 319. Ed. Cantab. 1642. Comp. G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 48.

A strange interpretation is mentioned by Oecumenius and Theophylact, *viz.*, that the vision of Jesus standing was vouchsafed not merely for Stephen's sake, in order that he might be encouraged and comforted, but also for the Jews' sake, because it would have been undesirable to let them hear that Jesus was sitting. See Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 152, cxxv. 920.

Adamus, in a homily for St. Stephen's Day, gives a long and fanciful interpretation of passages which speak of the Lord Jesus as walking, standing, or sitting. He takes the Session of Jesus at the right hand of the Father to mean glorification after humiliation, and the *standing* (of St. Stephen's vision) to mean coequality with the Father. He consequently finds the greater comfort in the conception of Jesus as standing.

> *Vide Filium hominis ambulantem in mortalitate, sedentem in glorificatione, stantem in aeternitate. Et felix quidem qui assidue ambulantem intuetur; felicior, qui sedentem; felicissimus, qui stantem* (*Sermo* xxxii. 4. Migne, *P.L.*, cxcviii. 273.).

1 Corinthians xv. 24 ff.

The end.

The following explanations of this phrase have been given;

(1) The ultimate condition of Christ and His Kingdom (as contrasted with dissolution).

Hilary, *De Trin.*, xi. 28. Migne, *P.L.*, x. 418.

(2) The end of Christ's mediatorial Kingdom.
Olshausen, *ad loc.*; Godet, *ad loc.*

(3) The General Resurrection.
Theodoret, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 356; G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 63 (*finis rerum humanarum hac in terra*).

(4) The end of all things, the goal of the entire economy of redemption and sanctification.
Chrysostom, *ad loc.* *Opera*, Tom. x. 427, Ed. Montfaucon. Par. 1837.
Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 869.

When He shall have delivered up the Kingdom unto God even the Father.

The interpretations of this clause are as follows:

(1) The cessation of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, in the sense of the delivering of the perfected saints to the Father.
Irenaeus, *Contra Haer.*, v. 36, 2. *Opera*, Tom. i. p. 819. Ed. Stieren; Eusebius, *De Eccl. Theol.*, iii. 15. Migne, *P.G.*, xxiv. 1028; Hilary, *De Trin.* xi. 29. Migne, *P.L.*, x. 418; Gregory Nyss., Migne, *P.G.*, xliv. 1318; Jerome, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. xi. 944. Ed. Vall. Ver.[1]; Eucherius, *Instruct.* i. Migne, *P.L.*, l. 805; Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 872; Theophylact, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 764[2]; Melanchthon, *ad loc.*; Coverdale, *Works, Fruitful Lessons, etc.*, p. 385, P.S.

(2) The bringing of the saints to the contemplation of God.
Augustine, *De Trin.* i. 16. *Opera*, Tom. viii. 1168, Ed. Par.; Petrus Dam., Migne, *P.L.*, cxlv. 905.

[1] Jerome expands the conception in two ways: (1) Christ delivers up the Saints, as the Mediator through whom alone access to the Father is obtained; (2) He delivers them to be the subjects of God alone (as contrasted with the Devil).

[2] Theophylact and others regarded St. Paul's language as the repudiation of two possible errors: (1) That the Son is greater than the Father; (2) that there are two first causes.

(3) The turning of enemies into friends.

Chrysostom, *Exp. in Psal. cix. Opera*, Tom. v. 307, Ed. Montfaucon Par. 1835.

(4) The restoration of the sole sovereignty of the Father.

Tertullian, Adv. Prax. c. iv. Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 159; Bradford, *Sermons, Meditations*, p. 272 P.S.; Calvin, *ad loc.*; G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 63; Olshausen, *ad loc.*; Wordsworth (Bp. Chr.) *ad loc.*; Alford, *ad loc.*; Meyer, *ad loc.*; Godet, *ad loc.*; Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 427. Ed. 1901.

(5) The *manifestation* that the Father is alone unoriginate, and the sole source of all things.

Augustine, *Liber de Divers. Quaest. c.* lxix. 1. *Opera*, Tom. vi. 104 (comp. *De Fid. et Symb. c.* 18; *Ibid.* 272); Chrysostom, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. x. 427, Ed. Montfaucon, 1837; Walafridus Strabo, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.L.*, cxiv. 547; Beza, *ad loc.*

Many writers who admit that the words indicate the cessation of Christ's kingdom, distinguish between the dispensational kingdom and that which will have no end.

The kingdom which is Christ's as the omnipotent Agent of Creation has no end; that which has been committed to Him for the purposes of grace will cease, when those purposes have been fulfilled. See, e.g., Gregory Naz., *Orat.* xxx. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 108; Chrysostom, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. x. 432 f.; Theophylact, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 764; Luther, *ad loc.*; Melanchthon, *ad loc.*; Wordsworth (Bp. Chr.), *ad loc.*; Prof. Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, p. 32.

Till (ver. 25).

The use made of the passage by Arius and Marcellus led to an insistence by earlier writers on the distinction between *donec exclusivum* and *donec continuativum.*

The following interpretations of the significance of ἕως in this passage should be noticed:

(1) The ultimate perfection of Christ's kingdom.

Eusebius of Caesarea, *De Eccl. Theol.*, iii. Migne, *P.G.*, xxiv. 1026; Jerome, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. xi. 944, Ed. Vall. Ver.; Gregory Naz., *Orat.*, xxx. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 108; Augustine, *De Trin.*, i.

16. *Opera*, Tom. viii. 1168; *Liber de Divers. Quaest.*, lxix. 5.[1] *Opera*, Tom. vi. 108.

(2) The permanence of Christ's Kingdom.

Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 873; Theophylact, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 764.

(3) The cessation of Christ's dispensational kingdom.

Luther, *ad loc.*; G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 63; Perowne, on Psalm cx.;[2] Godet, *ad loc.*

When He saith (ver. 27).

These words have been generally taken to refer to the Psalmist's prophetic declaration (*God, by the Scripture*, Godet). They are interpreted by some writers as referring to God's announcement that the subjection has been accomplished. See, e.g., Meyer, *ad loc.*; Alford, *ad loc.*; Robertson and Plummer, *ad loc.*

Then shall the Son also Himself be subject (ver. 28).

The explanations which have been given of these words fall into two principal groups; within the groups there are minor differences, but the main question is whether the words refer to Christ as God or as Man.

(1) Christ as God.

(*a*) Subordination in order and will.

Cyril. Hier., *Cat.* xv. 30. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxiii. 912; Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 876; Alford, *ad loc.*; Meyer, *ad loc.*; Godet, *ad loc.*

(*b*) Anthropomorphic expression for the concord that exists between Christ and the Father.

Jerome, *ad loc.* *Opera*, Tom. xi. 944, Ed. Vall. Ver.; Chrysostom, *ad loc.* *Opera*, Tom. x. 431, Ed. Montfaucon, 1837.[3] Comp. Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 872.

[1] Augustine explains the perfection as (1) of bliss, (2) of victory.

[2] Bp. Perowne regards this as a meaning imported by St. Paul in his use of Ps. cx. 1. He maintains that *until* does not necessarily have this sense, and the original context does not suggest it.

[3] Chrysostom adds the further idea that the purpose is to teach humility as *the mother of all virtues*.

(2) Christ as Man.

(*a*) Subject in Himself for the sake of the faithful. The completion of the obedience which He manifested in the Incarnation and Crucifixion. The fulfilment of the purpose of the Economy.

Hilary, *De Trin.*, xi. 30. Migne, *P.L.*, x. 419 [1]; Basil, *Adv. Eunom.*, iv. *Opera*, Tom. i. 288, Ed. Bened. Par.; Augustine, *Contra serm. Arian*, 34.[2] *Opera*, Tom. viii. 993; G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. pp. 65 f.; Bishop Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 106; Prof. Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, p. 33; Robertson and Plummer, *ad loc.*

(*b*) Subject in the faithful, through the mystical union. Humanity subject to the Godhead. Just as Christ still suffers in His Body the Church and awaits the completion of His sufferings (comp. Col. i. 24), so He may be said to be still awaiting the complete subjection to the Father, which will take place when He delivers the saints to Him, complete in number and perfect in nature.

Origen, *De Prin.*, iii. 5, 6; Jerome, *Epist.*, lv. 5. Migne, *P.L.*, xxii. 564; Ambrose, *De Fide*, v. 13 f.; Basil (Caes.), *Epist.* viii. 8; Gregory Naz., *Orat.*, xxx. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 108; Gregory Nyss. Migne, *P.G.*, xliv. 1304; Theodoret, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 357; Beza, *ad loc.*

That God may be all in all.

The interpretations of this phrase may be summarized as follows;—

(1) *God.*

(*a*) The reference is to the Godhead, and not to the Father alone.

(*a*) In contrast with the partial possession of the Divine Nature enjoyed by the saints in this life.

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[1] Hilary held the view that the subjection involved the absorption of the human in the Divine. See below, pp. 64, 87.

[2] Augustine maintains against Hilary and others that the subjection proves the permanence of Christ's human nature, including His body. See below, pp. 91 f.

Hilary, *De Trin.*, xi. 49. Migne, *P.L.*, x. 432; Jerome, *Epist.*, lv. 5. Migne, *P.L.*, xxii. 564; Ambrose, *De Fide*, v. 14; Gregory (Naz.), *Orat.* xxx. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 112; Leo the Great, *Sermo* lxiii. Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 355; Melanchthon, *ad loc.*; Professor Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, p. 33.

(β) In contrast with the dispensational government and revelation of Christ.

Bradford, *Sermons, Meditations*, p. 272, P.S.; Meyer, *ad loc.*; Godet, *ad loc.*

(*b*) The reference is to the Father, Who will be manifested as the sole source of all things.

Theophylact, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 768; Hugo Grotius, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. ii. 822, Ed. Amst. 1679; G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 66.

(2) *All in all.*

(*a*) The possession by the saints of the Divine Nature in its entirety.

Origen, *Epist. ad Rom. Opera*, Tom. iv. 575, Ed. Par.; Gregory Naz., *Orat.*, xxx. Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 112; Jerome, *Epist.* lv. 5. Comp. *Dial. Contra Pel. c.* 18. *Opera*, Tom. ii. 699, Ed. Vall. Ver.; Ambrose, *In Psalm.* lxi. 2. Migne, *P.L.*, xiv. 1170; Cassian, *Instit.* v. 4; Wessel, *De Caus. Incarn.*, xii; Meyer, *ad loc.*

(*b*) The same idea, with additional emphasis on the cessation of mediation. Godet, *ad loc.*; Robertson and Plummer, *ad loc.*

(*c*) The absorption of the human in the Divine.

Hilary, *De Trin.*, xi. 49. Migne, *P.L.*, x. 432. Strongly opposed by Augustine, *Contra serm. Arian.*, 34. *Opera*, Tom. viii. 993.

(*d*) The reconciliation of all things to God; the annihilation of evil.

Origen, *In Joann. Ev.*, i. 29. *Opera*, Tom. iv. 38, Ed. Par.; Gregory Nyss, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, xliv. 1316; Jerome, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. xi. 944. Ed. Vall. Ver.; Theodoret, *ad loc.* Migne,

P.G., lxxxii. 360; Oecumenius, *ad loc.* Migne, P.G., cxviii. 876; Coverdale, *Works. Fruitful Lessons*, p. 385, P.S.; Beza, *ad loc.*; Joach. Camerarius, *ad loc.* (See Beza, *Nov. Test.*, Ed. Cantab. 1842); Professor Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, p. 33.

(*e*) The meeting of every need, and satiating of every good desire.

Augustine, *Contra Serm. Arian.*, 34. *Opera*, Tom. viii. 993; Bradford, *Sermons, Meditations*, p. 272, P.S.

(*f*) The abolition of all differences of race and obstacles of sin.

Bengel, *ad loc.*

(*g*) The manifestation of God as the sole source of all things.

Chrysostom, *ad loc. Opera*, Tom. x. 433, Ed. Montfaucon, 1837; Walafridus Strabo, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.L.*, cxiv. 547; Theophylact, *ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 768; G. C. Knapp, *Opusc.*, Tom. i. p. 66. Comp. Oecumenius, Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 876.

Hebrews viii. 3. On the whole passage see Dimock, *Our one Priest on high*, pp. 8 ff.

(1) The following writers supply ἦν with ἀναγκαῖον. Bp. Westcott (with addition of emphasis on the aorist tense of προσενέγκῃ as indicating a completed act of offering).

The Peschito Syriac, Theophylact (προσενέγκῃ refers to the death of Christ. *Ad loc.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxxv. 288), Beza (*necesse fuit . . . quod offerret*), Waterland (*Works*, vol. iv. p. 515. Oxford 1843), John Owen (*An exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. vi. p. 41).

(2) The following writers supply ἐστιν. Erasmus, Oecumenius (*something to offer* is explained as referring to the death of Christ. Migne, *P.G.*, cxix. 361), Lünemann, Hofmann, Bishop Moule, Wickham (προσενέγκῃ emphasized as indicating a completed offering. The sentence is treated as a statement of principle in terms of time. The necessity *is* not that Christ should be always offering, but that He should be always an offerer, see below, p. 143), Alford (regards it

as referring to the blood of the one offering, which Christ is represented as bearing into the Holy Place and constantly applying to the needs of men), Dr. W. Milligan (regards προσενέγκῃ as indeterminate. He supports the idea of continued offering on the ground that the fundamental conception of the Lord's offering is that it is the offering of His Life; the offering and the Offerer are identified, and both are eternal. *The Ascension of Our Lord*, pp. 121 ff. Cf. Prof. G. Milligan, *Theology of the Ep. to the Hebrews*, pp. 141 ff.)

Hebrews x. 12.

Each of the two possible constructions of εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς has received considerable support. The following lists of authorities are representative, though not complete.

(1) As qualifying προσενέγκας θυσίαν.

Chrysostom, Primasius, Oecumenius, Theophylact, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Kuinoel, Valcken, Bengel, Bohme, Chr. Wordsworth, Westcott, Wickham.

Calvin's translation is *one sacrifice for perpetuity* or *one perpetual sacrifice*, a phrase which he uses in the sense of *a sacrifice perpetually efficacious*. Alford and Wordsworth appear to be in error in including Calvin in their lists of authorities for the other construction. Wordsworth refuses the translation *one perpetual sacrifice* on grammatical grounds; but it is obvious that he did not regard it as the equivalent of *one sacrifice available for ever*, which is his own translation.

(2) As qualifying ἐκάθισεν.

Syriac, Bruno, Euthymius Zigabenus, Herveus, Cranmer, Ridley, Becon, Erasmus, Grotius, Owen, De Wette, Bleek, Lünemann, Ebrard, Hofmann, Delitzsch, Alford, Kay.

This construction is also found in one of the *Spuria* which are included in the Benedictine Edition of Chrysostom's Works. See *Hom. in Incarn. Opera*, Tom. viii. 901.

Cranmer and Ridley translate: *sitteth for ever*. (Cranmer, *On the Lord's Supper*, p. 94, P.S.; Ridley, *Works*, p. 210, P.S.). Owen regards the phrase as introducing a contrast with the short stay of the Levitical High Priest in the Holy of Holies, and explains it as meaning *He sat down to offer no more*.

For the Vulgate, and its influence upon the Western interpretation of this passage, see below pp. 106 ff.

Part II

HISTORY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DOCTRINE

CHAPTER I

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Qui Patris ad dexteram sedes,
Jesu, tibi sit gloria
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu
In saeculorum saecula.
Brev. Noviom.[1]

THE most universal interpretation of the Heavenly Session of Christ has associated it with the idea of glory. There has been diversity both in the form which the conception has taken, and in the conclusions which have been drawn from it, but underlying these differences of explanation and application there has been complete unanimity as to the central significance of this Article of the Creed.

The differences alluded to manifested themselves from the first, but it was not until the time of the Arian controversy that they became symptoms of serious divergence on fundamental points. Then they began to take a conspicuous place in the disputes which raged round the doctrines of the Deity and the eternal Personality of our Lord. Was the glory upon which Christ entered when He took His seat *on the right hand of the Majesty on high* that which He had with the Father before the world was, or was it merely the culmination of His earthly experience? Did He return to that condition which was His by virtue of His eternal Being, or did He enter

[1] Neale, *Hymni Ecclesiae*, p. 154.

upon a condition which was the reward of His obedience? Was the Session a proof of His equality with the Father, or was it a declaration of His subjection and subordination to the Father? Did the Session indicate a state which was to last into eternity, or one which was only dispensational and to be followed by a cessation of Christ's separate Personality through absorption in the Father or, at least, by an eternal subordination? Such were the questions which came into prominence in the fourth century, and brought the doctrine of the Session into a conspicuous place in the arena of doctrinal conflict.

The settlement of the Arian controversy did not eliminate variety of opinion on the question whether the Session was to be related in thought to the Divine or to the human nature of our Lord, but it dissociated the divergence from the sphere of that which was fundamental.

The Ante-Nicene Period

There is very little reference to the subject of the Session in the Apostolic Fathers.

Clement quotes Ps. cx. 1 and Heb. i. 13 in his exhortation to the Corinthian Christians to be loyal to Christ, but he makes no attempt to interpret the passages.[1] It was sufficient for his purpose that they predicated of Christ a glory which entitled Him to the loyal obedience of His disciples.

Two of the Epistles of Ignatius contain brief summaries of the Faith, but each of them concludes with the statement of the Resurrection.[2]

[1] *c.* xxxvi.; Migne, *P.G.*, i. 281.

[2] *Epist. ad Magn.*, *c.* xi.; *ad Trall.*, *c.* ix. It is only in the Long Recension that the fuller form of the Creed is given, including statements both of the Ascension and of the Session. See Migne, *P.G.*, v. 672, 681, 773, 789. In the spurious Epistle to the Tarsians (*c.* vi.) the declaration of Ps. cx. 1 is cited as proof of

The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* quotes Ps. cx. 1, to prove that Jesus was not merely the Son of David and Son of man but also the Son of God.[1]

Apart from these quotations of Scripture the only explicit reference to the Session in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers is found in the epistle of Polycarp. Exhorting the Philippians to faith in God as revealed in the Person of Jesus, Polycarp reminds them that God gave unto Jesus *glory and a throne on His right hand.* He interprets the Session as signifying sovereignty and dominion. His words are :—

> *Unto Whom all things were made subject that are in heaven and that are on the earth : to Whom every creature that hath breath doeth service : Who cometh as judge of quick and dead.*[2]

Justin Martyr makes frequent use of Ps. cx. 1 in his argument from the fulfilment of prophecy, and in a threefold connexion. (1) As part of the general proof of the truth of Christianity.[3] (2) As an answer to the objection which the Jews urged against the humiliation of Jesus. Justin points out that the two Advents were foretold, and that after the first Advent God brought Christ again from the earth, setting Him at His right hand.[4] (3) As a proof of the Christian belief in plurality within the Godhead.[5]

The argument is based on the verse as a whole, and not on any specific significance attached to the idea of session ;

the Deity of Jesus. "How could a mere man be addressed in such words as these : *Sit thou at my right hand* ?" Migne, *P.G.*, v. 893.

[1] *c.* xii. ; Migne, *P.G.*, ii. 764.
[2] *c.* ii. ; Migne, *P.G.*, v. 1008.
[3] *Apol.* 1, *c.* xlv. ; Migne, *P.G.*, vi. 396.
[4] *Dial.*, *c.* xxxii. ; *ibid.*, 541.
[5] *Op. cit.*, *cc.* lvi., cxxvii. ; *ibid.*, 601, 772.

but it is evident that Justin associated the Session with the conception of our Lord's Deity.

Irenaeus lays stress on the Session as a proof of the Deity of Jesus. In his condemnation of attempts to speculate about the unrevealed things of God, he affirms that we must leave such matters to *God and His Word to Whom alone He said : " Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet." Whereas we are still living on the earth, and not yet seated on His throne.*[1]

The words of the Psalm are also frequently introduced in his quotation of Scriptural testimony to the sovereignty[2] and Deity [3] of Jesus, and to the identity of Jesus and Christ.[4]

In Tertullian's writings the bearing of the Session upon the doctrine of the Person of Christ receives only incidental treatment. He makes use of such passages as Ps. cx. 1, Acts vii. 55, 1 Cor. xv. 24, to show that the Catholic doctrine of the Godhead, while maintaining a distinction of Persons, does not destroy the unity of the Essence.[5] But these points arise out of the context and general import of the passages rather than from any significance specially assigned to the conception of Session.

Origen associates the Session with the ideas of sovereignty and stability. It connotes *the Kingdom of God and of the Son, which is established by the Father, and is always at the right hand of the Father.*[6]

But he is very sparing in his references to it, and does not appear to have taken much account of the emphatic

[1] *Contra Haer.*, ii. 28, 7 ; *Opera*, Tom. i. 387, Ed. Stieren. Lips.
[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 6, 1 ; Tom. i. 443.
[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 12, 2 ; Tom. i. 476.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 10, 6 ; 16, 3 ; Tom. i. 462, 507.
[5] *Adv. Prax.*, *cc.* iv, xi., xxx. ; Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 159, 166, 195.
[6] See his comment on Mt. xxii. 42 ; *Opera*, Tom. iii. 834, Ed. de la Rue, Paris.

statements of it in the Apostolic writings. He gives, it is true, a list of passages in Holy Scripture which refer to the Session of God or Christ, but he omits entirely the witness of the Epistles.[1] And not only so, but in his comments on Rom. viii. 34, in the place of St. Paul's simple statement that Christ is *at the right hand of God*, he substitutes the idea of Christ *standing* at the right hand,[2] which is fairly clear evidence that in this matter he attached little importance to the normal usage of the New Testament. He appears to have been more concerned to repudiate the idea of literal session than to explain the significance of the metaphor. His attention was concentrated on the conception of Christ being at the right hand of the Father rather than on the conception of His being *seated* at the right hand.

Cyprian quotes Ps. cx. 1, amongst other passages, to prove to the Jews that Christ, after His Resurrection, was to receive everlasting power and glory.[3] But, with this exception, his writings contain no reference to the statements of the Session in their bearing upon the doctrine of the Person of our Lord.

Novatian, in his treatise *De Trinitate*, devotes considerable attention to the Scriptural proof of the Deity of Jesus, but does not include the Statements of the Session.[4] And this is the more remarkable because in a later passage he quotes Ps. cx. 1 as a proof of the distinction of the Persons of the Father and of the Son.[5]

Looking at the Ante-Nicene witness as a whole, we find that the Session of our Lord occupied a more prominent

[1] See his comment on Mt. xx. 20; *ibid.*, p. 714.
[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.*, Lib. vii.; *Opera*, Tom. iv. 607.
[3] *Ad. Quir. Test.*, ii. 26; *Opera*, p. 93, Ed. Hartel.
[4] *cc.* xii. *et seq.*; Migne, *P.L.*, iii. 905 ff.
[5] *c.* xxvi.; *ibid.*, 936 f.

place in the thought of the West than in that of the East. Even in the West it was the fact of Christ being at the right hand of God that was interpreted, rather than the special significance of the Session. Attention seems to have focussed itself at first upon the simple conception of Christ entering as man upon the glory which was the due reward of His obedience. But the development of the Monarchian Controversies brought into prominence the doctrinal aspect of the subject, and it was seen to have a bearing upon the questions that arose about the Deity of our Lord, and the distinction of Persons in the Godhead.

In this period there is not much indication of the doctrine of the Session being in itself a matter of dispute ; but the use which was made of it by orthodox teachers rendered it inevitable that their interpretation should be controverted by opponents of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and by the middle of the fourth century the doctrine of the Session had become an important factor in the conflict with Arianism.

The Period of the Arian Controversy

Arius and his disciples interpreted Christ's exaltation exclusively as the reward of virtue, taking their stand upon such a passage as *wherefore also God hath highly exalted him* (Phil. ii. 9).[1]

From this interpretation they made two deductions : (1) Christ must have been morally changeable (τρεπτὸς ἢ ἀλλοιωτός). (2) Christ must have been subordinate and inferior, because *He took His seat* at the invitation of the Father.[2] And so they arrived at their position that Christ was not God, in the full sense of the word, but only a created Divinity.

The answers which were given by Catholic teachers of

[1] Comp. Athanasius, *Orat.* i. *contra Arianos*, *c.* 37 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxvi. 88. [2] Comp. Ambrose, *De Fide*, ii. 12.

the East exhibit for the most part a characteristic difference from those which were forthcoming in the West. Eastern thought found in the Session a proof of Christ's Deity: Western thought regarded it as the goal of His Incarnate Life.

(*a*) Eastern Fathers

Athanasius admitted that Christ was exalted as man, but he insisted that it was not for His own sake that He was thus exalted, but for the sake of mankind, in order that He might become righteousness for us.[1] The glory was God's gift to man in and through Christ: but the manner of the exaltation was in itself a proof that Christ was more than man, for Session at the right hand of the Father denotes participation in the Father's sovereignty, and possession of the Father's essence.[2]

Cyril of Jerusalem adopted a different line of reply to the Arian interpretation. He refused to regard Christ's Session as being in any way the reward of His obedience when on earth. The Session was not exaltation. Christ did not begin to sit at God's right hand after the Ascension, but has sat there from eternity. The Session was not a fact in time but a condition in eternity.

Thus he writes:—

Believe also in the Son of God, the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Who sitteth on the right hand of the Father before all ages. For it was not, as some thought, that He was crowned, as it were, after His Passion by God, and on account of His patience received the throne at the right hand; but ever since He is (and He is eternally begotten) He has the royal honour, being seated together with the Father, being God and wisdom and power.[3]

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[1] See *Orat.*, i. *Contra Arianos*, *c.* 41; Migne, *P.G.*, xxvi. 96.
[2] *Op. cit.*, *c.* 61; *ibid.*, 140.
[3] *Cat.*, iv. 7; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxiii. 464.

Again he writes :—

Let one Son be preached, sitting before the ages at the right hand of the Father : Who did not receive this state of sitting with the Father in the times after His Passion by way of advancement, but hath it eternally.[1]

In another passage Cyril collects the Scriptural references to the Session.[2] The list is complete, with the exception of Apoc. iii. 21. The omission is explained by the fact that Cyril excluded the Apocalypse from his list of Canonical books : but it is none the less a matter for regret, because the passage demands particular attention on the part of those who interpret Christ's Session with the Father as signifying equality. It provides an easy objection to the interpretation on the ground that the disciple's session with Christ must also denote equality. This need of explanation was perceived by some writers,[3] but Cyril's exclusion of the Apocalypse prevented his dealing with the difficulty.

It is not only in this omission that Cyril's treatment of the Session is inadequate. He also ignores the principal feature in the Scriptural mode of presenting it. In the New Testament attention is concentrated upon the Session in its relation to the Incarnation. It is treated as a state which had a beginning in time. Christ is represented as having taken His seat at the right hand of God in our nature rather than as having sat from eternity in His Divine nature.[4] But this usage of the New Testament

[1] *Cat.*, xi. 17 ; *ibid.*, 712. [2] *Cat.*, xiv. 29 ; *ibid.*, 861.

[3] Comp. Ambrose, *De Fide*, v. 14 ; Gregory, *Moral.*, xxvi. *c.* 28. Migne, *P.L.*, lxxvi. 381 ; Haymo, *Exp. in Apoc.* (ch. iii, 21) ; Rupert, *Comment. in Apoc.* (iii. 21) ; G. C. Knapp, *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i, pp. 45 f.

[4] Comp. ἐκάθισεν, Mc. xvi. 19, Heb. viii. 1, x. 12 ; κεκάθικεν, Heb. xii. 2.

finds no parallel in Cyril's language. He never uses the aorist tense except in the quotation of Scripture or of the early Creed of Jerusalem. *Τὸν καθεζόμενον* is his substitute for *τὸν καθίσαντα*,[1] and he adds the explanatory clause, *ἀφ' οὗπερ ἐστιν, ἐστι δὲ ἀεὶ γεννηθείς*.[2]

In his interpretation, moreover, Cyril allowed his fear of Arian doctrine to drive him to unguarded language, which amounted to denial of the plain teaching of the New Testament. He denounced as intolerable the idea that the Session was in any sense a consequence of the Incarnation. It may be presumed that he was merely opposing a theory which ignored the pre-Incarnate glory of Christ, but his language goes beyond that.

This phenomenon of Cyril's writings must be studied in connexion with the history of the Creed of Jerusalem. Before the Creed was revised in the middle of the fourth century the statement of the Session, as given by Cyril himself, was *καὶ καθίσαντα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς*.[3] This in the revised Creed became *καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς*.

It appears therefore to be most probable that the change was due to Cyril's fear of the Arian interpretation. And if so, we have here the explanation of the form which the clause took both in the Constantinopolitan Creed, which was an adoption of the revised Creed of Jerusalem, and in the insertion which had been made in the Creed of Nicaea before the middle of the fifth century.[4]

Epiphanius explains the Session as signifying the equality of the Son with the Father, and the distinctness of the Son from the Father. But he does not adopt Cyril's one-sided interpretation.

[1] Comp. *Cat.*, xiv. 30; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxiii. 865.
[2] Comp. *Cat.* iv. 7 (Migne, 464); xiv. 27 (Migne, 861).
[3] Comp. *Cat.*, xiv. 27; Migne, 861. [4] See above, p. 28.

His words are —

Behold, the Father is seated (καθῆται) *in heaven . . . the Son took His seat* (ἐκάθισεν) *at the right hand of the Father.*[1]

In an earlier passage he discusses the Arian interpretation of Christ's words, *My Father is greater than I*, and claims that they were the expression of true Sonship, and not a confession of inferiority, for there is no inequality in the Godhead.[2] But this seems to be another instance of the fear of admitting too much in the face of the Arian attack. Epiphanius' contemporary, Basil the Great, had no hesitation in explaining such passages as referring to the Incarnation, and as affording illustration of the sacrifice to which St. Paul alludes in Phil. ii. 6 f.[3]

Basil, in a discussion of the Arian interpretation of the Session, concentrates attention upon the meaning of the phrase *at the right hand*. He takes little account of the specific significance of session. *Standing* and *sitting* alike indicate, in his opinion, *the fixity and entire stability of nature*, but the position at the right hand signifies equality of nature and honour. Scripture puts before us, by the use of that phrase, the magnificence of the dignity of the Son. Any other interpretation would involve the dishonour of the Father as well as of the Son, for it would mean that God is circumscribed, and has all the consequent conditions of body attached to Him. The phrase bids us *worship and glorify with the Father Him Who in nature, glory and dignity is conjoined with Him.*[4]

[1] *Ancoratus*, *c.* 81 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xliii. 169.
[2] *Op. cit.*, *c.* 17 ; *ibid.*, col. 49.
[3] *Epist.*, viii. 8 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxii. 260 f. Comp. Aug., *De Div. Quaest.*, lxix. 1 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xl. 74.
[4] *De Spiritu Sancto*, *c.* vi. ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxii. 89.

Gregory of Nyssa cites Col. iii. 1 in support of the doctrine of the coequal Deity of Christ as against the theory of Eunomius that the Father has no sharer in His own Deity.[1]

To Chrysostom belongs the credit of fearlessly recalling Eastern thought to the more adequate conception of the Session in its relation to the Incarnation, which had previously found expression in the teaching of Athanasius. Chrysostom interpreted the Session as signifying primarily the acceptance by the Father of the first-fruits of our nature.

> *He offered the first-fruits of our nature to the Father and the Father so admired the offered gift, on account of the dignity of the offerer and the purity of the offering itself, that He accepted it with His own hands, and set Him next to Himself, saying, "Sit at my right hand."*[2]

But Chrysostom did not ignore the other aspect of the Session. It was on *the royal throne* that Christ took His seat; the Session is a proof of equality in honour and rank.[3]

(*b*) Western Fathers

When we turn to the writings of the Western Fathers we find a characteristic divergence from the general tenor of Eastern thought. The Session is treated as the culmination of Christ's earthly life. The emphasis of Western exegesis is laid on the conception of the Session as the exaltation of humanity rather than as the expression of Deity.

[1] *Contra Eunom., c.* ii.; Migne, *P.G.*, xlv. 485.

[2] *In Ascens., c.* 3; *Opera*, Tom. ii., 534. Ed. Montfaucon. Paris, 1834.

[3] *Contra Jud. et Gent., c.* 5. Tom. i. 690; *In Epist. ad Rom., Hom.* xv. *c.* 3. Tom. ix. 660; *In Epist. ad Heb., Hom.* ii. Tom. xii. 27.

This phenomenon cannot be accounted for on the ground that there was comparative freedom from the pressure of the Arian controversy, for Arianism was a force which had to be reckoned with in the West quite as much as in the East, as the writings of the Western Fathers testify. It must rather be explained as representing the characteristic difference between Eastern and Western thought, the former laying emphasis on the speculative and doctrinal aspects of the Creed, the latter on the historical and practical aspects. To the Western mind a Creed which added nothing to the statement of the Ascension would have been incomplete, not so much from the point of view of doctrinal content, as from that of the record of facts. An answer had to be given to the question, What did Jesus do after the Ascension?

It is interesting to notice in this connexion that no Western Creed omitted the statement of the Session, and that Western exegesis invariably interpreted it as the culminating point of Christ's Incarnate Life. It was no mere accident which added the closing verses to the Second Gospel. Humanly speaking, the addition, if such it was, represented the inevitable satisfying of the Western instinct.

Hilary's writings afford a conspicuous example of this difference in point of view. He regards the Session primarily as a stage in the completion of humanity. It was the elevation of manhood in the Son to harmonious association with the Godhead. But this is not the final stage in the glory of Christ. It is to be followed by the subjection of the Son to the Father, which Hilary explains as the absorption of the human by the Divine, the transfiguration of the human in such wise that no trace of the earthly body will remain.[1]

[1] *De Trin.*, ix. *cc.* 36–40; Migne, *P.L.*, x. 307 ff.

Incidentally, however, Hilary treats the Session as a proof of the Deity of Christ. The Incarnation had involved a separation of the Son from the Father ; and the Session was not only the gaining by humanity of its appropriate dignity, but also the regaining by Christ of His glory.[1]

Ambrose regards the Session as the entrance of Christ *as man* into the immediate enjoyment of the glory of God. He compares this immediate exaltation of Christ with the gradual exaltation of man.[2] But the Session does not signify that Christ *as God* is inferior to the Father.[3] Neither the statement that Christ sits at the right hand, nor the statement that the Father invited Him so to sit, can be allowed to have this significance, for the Session is related to the assumption by Christ of human nature.[4]

In another passage Ambrose contrasts Christ's Session with the Father and the believer's session with Christ. It is because of Christ's assumption of our nature that we sit with Him *in the heavenlies*. But our session is not the same as His. In Him it is original, in us it is derived. In Christ as man the whole human race is honoured : in Him as Head of the Church human nature has merited the right to the heavenly throne.[5]

In this emphasis on the human aspect of the Session Ambrose stands out in marked contrast from Cyril of Jerusalem. The latter conceived of the Session as eternal fact and as predicated of Christ as God ; the former regarded it as predicated of Christ in His human nature, and as the culminating point of His Incarnate Life.

[1] *Tract. in Psalm.* cxxviii. ; Migne, *P.L.*, ix. 807.

[2] *Enarrat. in Psalm.* xxxviii. ; Migne, *P.L.*, xiv. 1048.

[3] *Comment. in Ep. ad Rom.*, viii. 34 ; Migne, xvii. 129.

[4] *Epist.* lxxvi. 8 ; Migne, xvi. 1261 : *De Fide*, ii. 12 ; *ibid.*, col. 582. Comp. *De Fide*, iii. 11, 16.

[5] *De Fide*, v. 14 ; Migne, xvi. 685. Comp. iv. 10 ; Migne, xvi. 643.

Ruffinus draws a distinction between Christ's eternal existence with the Father, and His Session as man. He writes :—

> *He ascended therefore to the heavens, not where the Word of God had not been before, since He always was in the heavens, and was abiding in the Father, but where the Word made flesh had not before sat.*[1]

But in maintaining, as he does in a later passage,[2] that the Session was part of the *Mystery of the Incarnation* because the idea is inapplicable to the Divine Nature, he oversteps the mark. It does not appear to have occurred to him that session was an anthropomorphic conception which found frequent expression in Scriptural statements about God.

Augustine lays equal emphasis on the relation of the Session to the Incarnation, but his method of stating the point is slightly different from that of Ruffinus. He lays stress on the distinction between the omnipresence of Christ as God and His restricted presence as man ; and he regards Christ's Session at the right hand of the Father as pertaining to the latter.[3] He does not base any argu-

[1] *In Symb. Apost., c.* 31 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xxi. 367.

[2] *Sedere quoque ad dexteram Patris carnis assumptae mysterium est. Neque enim incorporeae illi naturae convenienter ista absque assumptione carnis appetantur ; neque sedis caelestis perfectio divinae naturae sed humanae conquiritur. In Symb. Apost., c.* 32.

[3] *Quis est qui sedet ad dexteram Patris ? Homo Christus. Nam in quantum Deus, semper cum Patre et ex Patre ; et quando ad nos processit, a Patre non recessit. Hoc est enim esse Deum, ubique esse totum. Totus ergo Filius apud Patrem, totus in caelo, totus in terra, totus in utero virginis, totus in cruce, totus in inferno, totus in paradiso . . . sed hoc quod Filius dicitur sedere ad dexteram Patris, demonstratur quod ipse homo quem suscepit Christus potestatem acceperit judicantis. De Symb., Sermo ad Cat.*, iii. 7 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xl. 658. Comp. *Sermo* clxxxvii. 2 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xxxviii. 1001 : Tract. in Joann. Ev. L. 4 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xxxv. 1759 f.

ment on the conception of session in itself. Incidentally he treats it as signifying *potestas judicantis*,[1] but when he sets himself to explain the metaphor, he denies to it any other significance than that of *dwelling* or *being*,[2] and ignores other specific meanings which are associated with the conception in Holy Scripture. He explains *the right hand of the Father* by the words *honoris et felicitatis inenarrabilis celsitudo*.

The close of the fourth century witnessed the end of the Arian controversy within the borders of the Catholic Church. Arianism was by no means dead, but its claim to a place within the limits of orthodox belief had been finally repudiated. It is unnecessary therefore to refer in detail here to the subsequent treatment of the Session in its bearing upon the doctrine of the Person of our Lord.[3] It will be sufficient to note the fact that the emphasis of that treatment both in East and West has lain on the reference to our Lord's humanity. The Session has been generally interpreted as signifying the exaltation of Christ as man, and the elevation of humanity in Him. The later Eastern writers for the most part adopted this view; but in the tenth and twelfth centuries there was a return to the earlier interpretation in the writings of Oecumenius, Theophylact, and Euthymius Zigabenus.

[1] Comp. *Serm.* ccxxxv. 4; Migne, *P.L.*, xxxviii. 1119.

[2] Comp. *Serm.*, ccxiii. 4, ccxiv. 8; Migne, *P.L.*, xxxviii. 1062, 1070.

[3] A brief history of subsequent opinion is appended in an additional note to the chapter.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

INTERPRETATION OF THE SESSION IN RELATION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST, FROM THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

(*a*) Eastern Writers

Cyril of Alexandria frequently quotes Ps. cx. 1 to prove the equality of the Son with the Father.

Comp. *Thesaurus, Assert.* v. Migne, *P.G.*, lxxv. 65; *Assert.* xi. *Ibid*, 161; *De Sanct. Trin. Dial.* ii. *Ibid.*, p. 752.

He interprets Heb. i. 3 of Christ's humanity against the Arian assertion of the changeableness of His divine nature.

Comp. *Thesaurus, Assert.* xx. *Ibid.*, 337.

Theodoret interprets Eph. i. 20 and Heb. i. 3 of Christ's humanity.

See Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 516, 684.

Comp. *Theodore of Mopsuestia* on Eph. i. 20, Col. iii. 1. See Prof. Swete's edition of his Commentary on the Minor Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. i. pp. 138, 298.

John of Damascus explains the Session as signifying the participation of the humanity of Christ in the glory and honour of the Godhead.

Expos. de Fid. orth. iv. *cc.* 1, 2. Migne, *P.G.*, xciv. 1101.

Theodorus Studita quotes Eph. i. 20, ii. 6. to illustrate the dignity which the Session conferred upon Humanity.

Sermo. vii. Migne, *P.G.*, xcix. 517.

Oecumenius regards the Session as a proof of the Deity of Christ.

In Epist. ad Heb. i. 3. Migne, *P.G.*, cxix. 284.

Theophylact, commenting on Heb. i. 3, argues in favour of the equality of Christ with the Father from the fact that *He took His seat* and was not *commanded to sit.*

He distinguishes the words of Ps. cx. 1 (*The Lord said*) from a command, and treats them as a safeguard against the conception that the Son is ἄναρχος καὶ ἀναίτιος. (See Migne, *P.G.*, cxxv. 196.)

In his exposition of Heb. viii. 1 he says that the chief point of the passage is *that we have God as High Priest, for to sit belongs to none else but God.* (*Op. cit.* col. 285.)

The conception finds further expression in his comments on Heb. x. 12. (*Op. cit.*, col. 325).

Euthymius Zigabenus, commenting on Ps. cx. 1, bases his assertion of the equality of the Son and the Father on two grounds: (1) The use of the title *Lord* for both the Son and the Father. (2) The fact of the Session of the Son with the Father.

Migne, *P.G.*, cxxviii. 1081 f.

(*b*) Western Writers

Leo the Great maintains that Christ was exalted as man and not as the Son of God. The exaltation belonged to *the form which needed to be enriched by this increase of glory.* But because of the unity of Person the exaltation can be predicated of Christ without particular reference to *the form of a servant.*

Comp. *Epist.* cxxiv. 7. Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 1066.

Primasius says that humanity in the Word has been exalted to unity with God in His glory.

In Ep. ad Heb. i. 3. Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii. 689.

Fulgentius refers the Session to the human nature of Christ.

Contra Serm. Fast. c. xx. Migne, *P.L.*, lxv. 526.

Gregory the Great preserves the Western idea of the Session as the glorifying of the Incarnate Christ, but at the same time he insists on the fact that the glory was of such a kind as to betoken the equality of the Son and the Father.

His words are;—

> *Vincens Dominus in throno cum Patre sedisse se asserit, quia post passionis certamina, post resurrectionis palmam clarius se omnibus quod potestati Patris esset aequalis indicavit, eique se non disparem calcato aculeo mortis innotuit.*

Moral, xxvi. *c.* 28. Migne, *P.L.*, lxxvi. 381.

This passage is used by *Paterius*, *Alulfus*, and *Bede* in their expositions of Apoc. iii. 21.

Godefridus introduces a novel interpretation.

He conceives of *the right hand of God* as His acts of grace and works of mercy; and he regards *sitting at the right hand* as signifying the humble recognition of God as the Giver of all good things. Christ was willing to do this for man's sake.

Homil. Festiv. 48. Migne, *P.L.*, clxxiv. 870.

Alcuin regards the Session as signifying the glory of the assumed human nature of Jesus, the glory of equality of honour with God.

In Ep. ad Heb. i. 3. Migne, *P.L.*, c. 1034.

Haymo of Halberstadt writes:

In dextera Dei aequalitatis potentia designatur. Ad dexteram ergo Dei sedere describitur, quia hominem quem e nobis assumpsit per ascensionem Divinitati sociavit.

Homil. de Temp. 97. Migne, *P.L.*, cxviii. 548.

Sedit in throno Patris, id est, co-aequalis illi et coaeternus manet in eadem potentia.

Expos. in Apoc. Lib. ii., *c.* 3. Migne, *P.L.*, cxvii. 1001.

Hervey of Dole regards the Session as a proof of the Deity of Jesus.

Sedet, id est, quiescit et regnat et judicat sublimatus ad dexteram, id est, aequalitatem et honorificentiam majestatis, id est, Patris qui est majestas . . . sedet Filius in eadem sede sicut aequalis ne si in alia parte sederat minor esse videretur.

In Ep. ad Heb. i. 3. Migne, *P.L.*, clxxxi. 1523.

The explanation is repeated in his comments on Heb. viii. 3, and the language is borrowed by *Peter Lombard.*

Comp. Migne, *P.L.*, cxcii. 400.

Abelard regards the Session as the exaltation of the human nature of Jesus.

Qui est ad dextram . . . id est, secundum ipsam humanitatem resuscitatam in aeterna beatitudine perseverat.

Expos. in Ep. ad Rom. Lib. iii. Migne, *P.L.*, clxxviii. 908.

The English Reformers laid great stress on the Session in its relation to the human nature of our Lord. Their attitude can be explained as the natural consequence both of the controversies of their time and of their familiarity with the writings of the Latin Fathers.

Comp. Tindale, *Answer to More*, p. 239, P.S.; Cranmer,

On the Lord's Supper, iii. 95. *Works*, p. 93, P.S. ; Hooper, *Later Writings*, pp. 36, 49, 153, P.S. ; Ridley, *Brief Declaration*, p. 108 et saepe, Ed. Moule ; Bradford, *Sermons, Meditations*, p. 392, P.S. ; Coverdale, *Works, Fruitful Lessons*, p. 331, P.S. ; Becon, *Catechism*, p. 270, P.S. ; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 88, P.S. ; Jewel, *Controv. with Harding, Of Real Presence, Works*, vol. i., p. 477, P.S.

Occasional references to the Session as signifying the Deity of our Lord are found, as, for example, in Ridley, *Works*, p. 221, P.S. ; Hooper, *Later Writings*, p. 35, P.S.

In the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, the statements of the Session are explained as figurative expressions of *the glory which Christ, as man, enjoys above all others* (Article VI., Engl. Transl. Donovan, p. 70). But though the Session is predicated of Christ as man, the glory which it connotes is of such a kind that *it cannot consist with the nature of any other created being* (*op. cit.*, p. 71).

In addition to the idea of glory, the Session also signifies fixity and permanence. It *declares the fixed and permanent possession of royal and supreme power and glory which Christ received from the Father* (*Op. cit.*, p. 70).

Hooker explains the Session as signifying the sovereignty of Christ, both as God and as man, and the honour which belongs to Him as man.

Comp. *Eccl. Pol.* v., lv., 4–8 ; *Works*, vol. i. pp. 610 ff., Ed. Oxon, 1890.

Beza likewise associates the Session with the idea of sovereignty.

Significat autem sedere ad dextram Patris in caelis consortem esse imperii illius summi ; cujus etiam respectu Dei majestatem dicimus esse in caelis, non quod illic sit inclusa, sed quod illic potissimum emineat ; quanquam quod ad ipsam humanitatem Christi attinet, certum sit eam in caelis esse, non in terra ; quod alioqui imaginaria ipsius Ascensio et imaginarium corpus.

In Ep. ad Eph. ch. i. 20. *Nov. Test.* p. 574, Ed. Cantab., 1642.

Pearson explains the Session as the permanent enjoyment by *the Son of man* of divine sovereignty, glory and felicity.

Exposition of the Creed, pp. 525 f., Ed. Sinker.

Isaac Barrow writes in similar strain.

Comp. *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 363 ff., Ed. Hamilton, 1861.

John Owen explains Heb. i. 3, as referring not to the essential, eternal glory of the Son, but to that glory which was bestowed on Him by the Father after the sacrifice.

See *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. iii. p. 128, Ed. 1813.

G. C. Knapp appears to have been the first writer (with the possible exceptions of Bishop Pearson and Dr. Isaac Barrow) who deemed the doctrine of the Session to be worthy of more than incidental treatment. An *opusculum* of his entitled *De Jesu Christo ad dexteram Dei sedente* was published in A.D. 1787.[1]

Starting from Ps. cx. 1 as *origo formulae* he discusses J. D. Michaelis' view that it refers to the Session of Christ as God in the seat of God, that is, the ark.[2] He dismisses this on the ground that it is inconsistent both with the context and with the New Testament interpretation. He then discusses the further question as to whether the reference is to Christ as seated in His divine nature on the very throne of God, or as seated in His human nature in a subordinate position. He allows that Heb. viii. 1, xii. 2 admit of the former interpretation, but he decides on the latter in view of the conclusion which could be drawn from the fact of the session of the believer with Christ (Apoc. iii. 21). He interprets the Session therefore as referring not to the divine nature of Christ but to His dispensational rule, and boldly says, *pro mercede vel praemio id ipsi fuit.*

See *opusc.*, Tom. i. pp. 39 ff.

Olshausen, in his comments on Mt. xxvi. 64, points out that Christ in His pre-Incarnate state is never spoken of as

[1] It was republished in a collection of *opuscula* entitled *Scripta varii Argumenti*, A.D. 1805 and (2nd edition) 1823.

[2] Christ is thus contrasted with the Theocratic Kings who were prohibited from entrance, and with the Priests who did not sit but stood *ministrorum more*. See *Scripta Var. Arg.*, Tom. i., p. 44, Ed. 1823.

sitting at the right hand of the Father. The Session therefore refers to the exaltation of His humanity glorified, and to His participation as man in the divine sovereignty of the universe.

See *Commentary on the Gospels*, English Translation, vol. iv. p. 202. T. &. T. Clark.

Alford maintains that the Session is not associated in the New Testament with the idea of equality with the Father, or of sharing in the majesty of the Godhead, but with the state of waiting in the immediate presence of the Father, and thus highly exalted by Him, until the purposes of His mediatorial office are accomplished.

See his Commentary on the Greek Testament, note on Heb. i. 3.

Hengstenberg explains the Session as signifying the elevation of Christ above every human condition, and His investiture with full participation in divine power over heaven and earth.

See his *Commentary on the Psalms*, English Translation, vol. iii. p. 318. T. & T. Clark.

Ebrard says that the Session is *not applied in Holy Scripture to denote that form of world-government which the Logos exercised as eternally pre-existent, but only that participation in the divine majesty, dominion, and glory, to which the Messiah was exalted after His work was finished, therefore in time, and which is consequently exercised by Him as the glorified Son of man under the category of time.*

See Olshausen and Ebrard, *Comment. on the Epist. to the Hebrews*, English Translation, p. 27. T. & T. Clark.

Bishop Westcott explains the Session as the exaltation of the Incarnate Son to divine sovereignty, and His sharing in the fulness of God's majesty.

Comp. *The Historic Faith*, p. 82.

Professor Swete regards the Session as the enthronement of Christ, the Ascension being as it were the Coronation; but he suggests that it is related rather to the temporary economy than to the eternal kingdom which belongs to the Son as one with the Father.

See *The Ascended Christ*, pp. 16, 32.

CHAPTER II

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

Tu regnum caelorum tenes,
Et totus in Verbo tu es ;
Per Filium cuncta regis,
Sancto Spiritui fons es.

Tu mundi constitutor es ;
Sempiterno Throno sedes ;
Judex, ex alto humilis ;
Venisti pati pro nobis.
Hymn. ad Laud. Moz. Brev.[1]

THE conception of sovereignty has entered largely into the interpretation of the Session. The idea finds frequent and emphatic expression in the New Testament, and it has remained a conspicuous feature of the subsequent treatment of the subject. The following words of Irenaeus may be regarded as representing in this respect the general sentiment of Christendom :—

> *The Apostles . . . would not have called any one in his own person Lord except God the Father Who is Lord of all, and His Son Who received from His Father Lordship over all created things (omnis conditionis).*[2]

In the sub-Apostolic age the idea was present merely in its practical bearing upon personal life and discipleship ;[3] but the development of controversy about the

[1] Neale, *Hymni Ecclesiae*, p. 33.

[2] *Contra Haer.*, iii. 6, 1 ; *Opera*, Tom. 1, p. 442, Ed. Stieren.

[3] Comp. Clement, *Ep. ad Cor.*, *c.* xxxvi. ; Polycarp, *Ep. ad Phil.*, *c.* ii.

Person of Christ brought it into the arena of doctrinal conflict. This was partly due to the necessity of co-ordinating the conception of the sovereignty of Christ with that of the sovereignty of the Father, and partly to the difficulties of exegesis presented by St. Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff. The fact that Christ claimed divine sovereignty was in itself sufficient to cause the problem to arise, as soon as men began to form a Christology; but St. Paul's language in the Corinthian Epistle added greatly to its complexity.

The controversy speedily centred itself on St. Paul's words, and the history of their exegesis may be said to represent the history of opinion on the subject. And therefore in studying the history of the interpretation of the Session in its relation to the sovereignty of Christ we can concentrate our attention upon the history of the exegesis of that one passage.

Irenaeus quotes St. Paul's words in his description of the last things, but does not attempt to grapple with the difficulties which they present. He merely explains the delivering up of the kingdom to mean Christ's yielding His work to the Father.[1]

Tertullian, in his defence of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, maintains that the unity and sole government of God are not impaired by belief in the distinctness of the Persons; for the divine sovereignty which is now administered by the Son has been committed to Him by the Father and has to be restored by Him to the Father.[2]

If Tertullian had been an Eastern, or had been writing a century later, he would have been compelled to explain himself more clearly: but in the West the bearing of the

[1] *Contra Haer.*, v. 36, 2; *Opera*, Tom. i., p. 819, Ed. Stieren.
[2] *Adv. Prax.*, *c.* 4; Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 159.

final subjection of Christ upon the question of His equality with the Father had not yet arisen in an acute form, and Tertullian was concerned only with the difficulty of reconciling belief in the distinctness of the Persons with belief in the unity of essence and government.

The difference between the East and the West becomes immediately apparent when we turn to the writings of Origen. He has to explain St. Paul's words against those who argued from them that Christ was inferior to the Father.

He maintains that the final subjection must be considered in the light of Christ's obedience when He was on earth. It will be the supreme fulfilment by Christ, both in Himself and in those that are His, of that attitude towards the Father which He had set before men by His own example, and especially in His voluntary death on the Cross.

Thus he writes :—

> *In the end of the age, embracing in Himself all whom He subjects to the Father, and who through Him come to salvation, with them and in them He also Himself is subject to the Father, since all things consist in Him, and He is the Head of all, and in Him is salvation, and the fulness of those who attain to salvation.*[1]

Origen repudiates the idea that Christ is not subject to the Father now, but is to subject Himself hereafter. He maintains that St. Paul, in speaking of the final subjection, is referring to the blessedness of man's perfection, and the reward of the work undertaken by Christ.[2]

Christ is subject in man, as man's representative ; and just as He hungers and thirsts in man, so also, when every

[1] *De Princip.*, iii. 5, 6 ; *Opera*, Tom. i. 151, Ed. Par.
[2] *Op. cit.*, iii. 5, 7.

man is perfectly subject, then He also will be subject. The Session of Christ in glory in the meantime signifies the destruction of all sin and the power of evil.[1]

This conception of Christ being subjected in His Church exerted considerable influence on subsequent thought, in spite of the fact that Origen applied it in an altogether indefensible manner to the words of Christ *Of that day and hour knoweth . . . not even the Son*, which he explained as signifying the ignorance of the Church.[2]

One of the consequences of Origen's interpretation of the Subjection was that he was driven to a fanciful explanation of the words *that God may be all in all*, which he explained negatively as the removal of all sin [3] and positively as the completion of all virtues in each member of Christ.[4] This explanation likewise appears frequently in subsequent exegesis.

In the fourth century there appeared in the teaching of Marcellus an even more serious divergence from the Catholic Faith than that which Origen had to meet. Marcellus was a vigorous opponent, on the one hand, of the Sabellian denial of the distinction of the Persons in the Godhead, and, on the other hand, of the Arian theory of Christ as a created and therefore separate and inferior Divinity. But he maintained a position which was not less inconsistent with the teaching of Holy Scripture, and, in consequence of his championship of the Faith at Nicaea, was possibly more dangerous than both of the errors which he set himself to oppose.

He interpreted the words of St. Paul to mean that Christ

[1] *In Psalm.* xxxvi. 7; *Opera*, Tom. ii. 659 f. Cf. *Comment. in Rom.*, viii. 34; *Opera*, iv. 599.

[2] *In Matth.* xxiv. 36; *Opera*, Tom. iii. 874. Cf. Bp. Gore, *Dissertations*, pp. 116 f. See below, p. 88.

[3] *Opera*, iv. 38.

[4] *Opera*, iv. 575.

would cease to exist both as Man and as King. He regarded the phrase *till He hath put all enemies under His feet* as determining a limit of Christ's reign, and the phrase *that God may be all in all* as signifying that Christ's participation in human nature was only dispensational. Moreover, he attributed the distinction between the Father and the Son to the fact of the Incarnation and accordingly denied the eternal existence of the Son.[1]

This theory of the ultimate absorption of the Son by the Father brought Marcellus' doctrine within the category of the Sabellianism which he wished to avoid. Both systems denied the eternal distinctions within the Godhead, but Marcellus admitted the intervention of an economic and dispensational separation, whereas Sabellius alleged that the unity of Person remained unmodified by the Incarnation. Epiphanius may have had in mind this point of contact between the two theories, when he wrote the words *"He sitteth at the right hand"—He did not say, He entered into the Father, so as to refute Sabellius.* The language suggests a refutation of Marcellus' position, rather than that of Sabellius.[2]

Though the teaching of Marcellus raised in its more acute form the controversy about the eternal character of Christ's sovereignty, it was not the sole cause. Eunomius, the representative of the stricter Arians, was involved in the same error. But there was this difference between them, that, whereas the denial of the eternal sovereignty of Christ was the distinguishing feature of Marcellus' doctrine, it entered only incidentally into Eunomius' system of thought.

We have now to investigate the interpretation of St.

[1] Cf. Euseb., *Dogmat. De Eccl. Theol.*, iii.; Migne, *P.G.*, xxiv. 1025.

[2] *Ancoratus*, *c.* 17; Migne, *P.G.*, xliii. 49. Comp. *c.* 81.

Paul's words which orthodox thinkers adopted in view of these errors : and it will be an advantage at this point if we continue the examination of Eastern and Western thought separately.

(*a*) Eastern Writers

Eusebius of Caesarea was a vigorous opponent of Marcellus. His criticism fastened itself on to Marcellus' failure to understand the Scriptural use of the word ἕως, which frequently has an inclusive and not a determinative meaning, as, for example, in Rom. v. 14, 2 Cor. iii. 14.[1]

He maintains that in the passage in question the word has the same meaning as in Mt. xxviii. 20, Acts iii. 21. The sense of the passage is not that Christ's kingdom will come to an end, but that at the end He will rise from the throne and descend a second time to take the saints to Himself.

The final subjection is explained as Christ's presentation to the Father of those who are subject to Himself.[2]

Cyril of Jerusalem criticizes the theories of the cessation of Christ's kingdom and the solution of His Person, and attributes them both to a false exegesis of 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff.

He puts some pertinent questions to his imaginary opponent :—

> *Will not He, Who reigns before He has conquered His enemies, much more reign after they are overcome ?*
>
> *You say the work of Christ will last for ever : but Christ, through Whom you and all things were made, perishes ?* [3]

[1] See above, p. 45.
[2] Comp. *De Eccl. Theol.*, iii. ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxiv. 1026.
[3] *Cat.*, xv. 27 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxiii. 910.

He asks how all things are to be subjected to Christ. As perishing or as remaining? And if the things which are subjected to the Son remain, will not the Son, when subject to the Father, also remain?

He asserts that the subjection signifies not a beginning of obedience, but a continuation (Jo. viii. 29) of an eternal obedience, which is not of necessity, as of a servant, but of mind and love, as of a son.

Cyril's independence of thought is manifested here as in his treatment of the Session.[1] He does not regard the final subjection of Christ as a consequence of the Incarnation, either in His personal or representative capacity, but as the expression of an eternal relationship of filial love.

Epiphanius expresses a doubt as to the sincerity of Marcellus, on the ground that, in his defence to Pope Julius, Marcellus claimed that he was maintaining the unity[2] of Christ with the Father and the eternity of Christ against those who asserted that He was of a different essence and begotten later in time and created, but said nothing about his own peculiar doctrine.

Epiphanius points out that Holy Scripture does not say that Christ ascended unto the Father (εἰς τὸν Πατέρα) but that He took His seat at the right hand of the Father.[3]

Basil the Great insists on the human aspect of the final subjection.

> *If the Son is subjected to the Father in the Godhead, then He must have been subjected from the beginning, from whence He was God. But if He was not subjected, but shall be subjected, it is in His manhood, as for us, not in the Godhead, as for Himself.*[4]

[1] See above, pp. 73 ff.
[2] *Adv. Haer.*, iii. 72, 4; Migne, *P.G.*, xlii. 385.
[3] *Ancoratus*, *c.* 81; Migne, *P.G.*, xliii. 169.
[4] *Adv. Eunom.*, *c.* iv.; *Opera*, Tom i. 288, Ed. Garn.

He asserts that all the passages which were used to oppose the truth of the co-equal Deity of Christ relate to the Incarnation, and that 1 Cor. xv. 24 is no exception.

> *He makes thy subjection His own: and because of thy struggling against goodness, He calls Himself unsubjected. . . . One of our infirmities is that we are not subject, and He bare this. So all the things which happen to us to our hurt He makes His own, taking upon Himself our sufferings in His fellowship with us.*[1]

In other words, because the subjection lies still in the future, the Son is unsubjected now, not as being Himself disobedient, but as being man, and because humanity is not yet subject to God.

Gregory of Nyssa examines the various kinds of subjection which are mentioned in Holy Scripture, as, for example, the unwilling submission to a conqueror, and the submission, through inferiority of nature, of the brute creation to man. He then shows that none of these conceptions can be applied to Christ.

> *His subjection will not be that of an enemy, nor that of the brute, through deficiency in that which is good, nor that of a slave purchased with money, nor that of man subjecting himself to God for the purpose of obtaining salvation, nor that of His experience on earth when He subjected Himself to His earthly parents, for He is a stranger now to all advancement and alteration. His subjection is not for all time, but is to be at the end, and yet, if subjection is a good thing, how can it be absent from God now?*

And so he arrives at the view of Origen and Basil that the reference is to the subjection of Christ in and through man.[2]

[1] *Epist.* viii., *c.* 8; *Opera*, Tom. iii. 87.

[2] *Comment. in* 1 *Cor.* xv. 24; Migne, *P.G.*, xliv. 1304 f.

The argument is defective, for he studiously ignores the subjection of Jesus on earth to His Heavenly Father, apparently on the ground that the word ὑποτάσσειν is not used in that connexion in Holy Scripture. Moreover, the assertion that, if subjection were a good thing, it would not be absent now in the Godhead, will not stand examination. If the argument were applied to the doctrine of the Incarnation, it would involve either denial of the fact or belief in the eternity of Christ's humanity.

Gregory of Nazianzus asks what is to follow, when the point represented by ἕως in 1 Cor. xv. 25 and Acts iii. 21 has been reached. It cannot be that the kingdom is to cease or that Christ will be expelled from heaven? Holy Scripture says that there is to be no end of His kingdom (Lc. i. 3).

Gregory attributes the theory that Christ's kingdom is to end to two causes :—

(1) Misunderstanding of the meaning of ἕως, which does not always present a contrast between that which precedes and that which follows it, but often indicates an interval of time, without excluding that which follows, as in Mt. xxviii. 20.

(2) Failure to distinguish between the two kingdoms of Christ, one belonging to Him as the omnipotent sovereign of all whether willing or unwilling, the other belonging to Him as begetting subjection in men, and bringing them under His sway as willing subjects.

The former of these two kingdoms has no end ; but in the case of the latter, the end will come when the work of subjection ceases, for there will be no need for Christ to labour at subjecting men any more. And then He will rise for judgment, and, having separated the saved from the lost, He will stand as God in the midst of gods, i.e., the saved.[1]

[1] *Oratio*, xxx., *Theol.*, iv. *c.* 4 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 108.

The subjection of Christ is explained as the subjection of the Church. Gregory describes it as ἡ τοῦ πατρικοῦ θελήματος πλήρωσις.[1]

He criticizes the Sabellian interpretation of the words *that God may be all in all* which made them signify the resolution of the Son into the Father *like a faggot separated for a time from the great fire and then again joined to it.* *God* is not the Father, but the Godhead (ὅλος Θεὸς); and St. Paul is referring to the time when we shall be no longer many, as we are now, through our various passions (κινήμασι καὶ πάθεσιν), bearing in ourselves little or nothing which is wholly of God, but all will be fashioned after the form of God, possessing that which is wholly and only divine (ὅλοι θεοειδεῖς ὅλου Θεοῦ χωρητικοὶ καὶ μόνου). This is the perfection to which we are all hastening. What St. Paul here says indistinctly about God, he predicates in another place, in more open language, of Christ: *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew . . . but Christ is all in all* (Gal. iii. 28).[2]

Didymus of Alexandria cites the following passages of Holy Scripture against the heretical theories of a temporal kingdom which is to come to an end after the general resurrection: Pss. x. 16, xliv. 8 f., cxliv. 13; Is. vi. 5; Lc. i. 32 f.; Eph. v. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Heb. i. 7 f.

He says that the keys of the kingdom were given to Peter in order that he might receive all who acknowledge Christ's eternal kingdom, and reject all who fail to cry with Nathanael *Thou art the King of the Christians.*[3]

Chrysostom explains the delivering up of the kingdom by Christ as the conversion of the enemies of God; and maintains that, since it is a greater work to turn enemies into friends than to punish men who remain enemies, the

[1] *Op. cit.*, *c.* 5. [2] *Ibid.*, *c.* 6.
[3] *De Trin.*, i. *c.* 31; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxix. 421 ff.

delivery of the kingdom is no mark of inferiority.[1] It does not mean that the Son ceases to rule any more than when the Father is said to give it signifies that He deprives Himself of that which He gives. The Son is said to deliver up the kingdom, because it is through Him that we have been brought to the Father.[2] The language is anthropomorphic: it illustrates Christ's unspeakable love for His own, and teaches the lesson of humility.[3] If the delivery of the kingdom means that Christ ceases to reign, then it follows that the Father could not have been King before the kingdom was delivered up to Him by the Son.[4]

The subjection of the Son signifies His unity of heart and mind with the Father, and that the Father is the source and first cause of all that is good.[5]

Chrysostom distinguishes the two kingdoms of God, the one constituted by spiritual relationship (κατ' οἰκείωσιν), the other by creation. It is in the former sense only that the kingdom was given to the Son.[6]

That God may be all in all is explained as signifying the dependence of all things on God. The phrase guards against the idea of there being two unoriginate sources or two divided kingdoms. The words will be fulfilled when creation is in complete concord with God, and sin ceases to exist.

Theodoret writes in the same strain.

The delivery of the kingdom by Christ does not mean that He will be divested of sovereignty, but that He will

[1] *Expos. in Psal. cix.*; *Opera*, Tom. v. 307, Ed. Montfaucon, 1835.

[2] In *Joan. Hom.*, xlv.; Tom. viii. 305.

[3] *Hom.* lxx.; Tom. viii. 475. A similar explanation is given of Christ's Intercession. Comp. *In Epist. ad Rom., Hom.*, xv.; Tom. ix. 660.

[4] *In Epist.* I *ad Cor., Hom.* xxxix.; Tom. x. 427 f.

[5] *Ibid.*, 431. [6] *Ibid.*, 432.

subdue the Devil and his fellow-workers and prepare all to acknowledge and bow down before God.[1] "Εως signifies completeness, as in Is. xlvi. 4, and not limitation of time. Christ will completely subject all things to God.[2]

He maintains that the Arians and Eunomians were mistaken in applying the words *then shall the Son also Himself be subject* to Christ as God. St. Paul refers here to our resurrection in Christ. Christ will be subjected, when we, after our liberation from corruption, have become subject.[3]

He explains the phrase *that God may be all in all* by distinguishing between God's presence according to His Essence and His presence according to good will.

Essentially God is everywhere, but according to good will He is not in all. Even in those who fear Him He is not everything, for no one is absolutely pure. But in the future life, when corruption has ceased and passions have no place, He will be *all in all*. The fact that St. Paul (Col. iii. 11) predicates the same thing of Christ is sufficient proof that he regarded the Son as equal to the Father.[4]

Theodore of Mopsuestia explains the final subjection of Christ to the Father in the light of Phil. iii. 21. Christ's subjection of all things to Himself, there referred to, will be not that of servitude through necessity, but that of gratitude for blessings conferred. So when the Apostle says that the Son Himself shall be subject to the Father he does not mean that the Son will become a servant, for He will remain one with the Father, but that in His humanity He will through Himself offer all things to the Father.[5]

Oecumenius likewise denies that Christ's delivery of

[1] *In* 1 *ad Cor.* xv. 24; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 356.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*
[4] Comp. Ambrose, *De Fide*, v. 14; Migne, *P.L.*, xvi. 684.
[5] Commentary on *The Minor Epistles of St. Paul*, Ed. Swete, vol. i, p. 244.

the kingdom involves the cessation of His sovereignty. If the kingdom is His when men are rebellious, are we to suppose that He will be deprived of it after they have been subdued? The meaning of the passage is *that Christ makes the Father partner, as it were, of His own work, for all the works of the Trinity are common. The Son hands the kingdom over, not as ceasing to have it, but as ceasing to labour at it; even as He received it, not as though He had it not, but with a view to liberating it from rebellion and tyranny by His own labours.*[1]

He explains ἕως as signifying not limitation but perpetuity, as in Mt. i. 25, xxviii. 20.

It should be noticed here that Oecumenius and others seem to ignore the fact that in Ps. cx. 1 the Session of Christ is associated rather with the idea of His rest from labour, while the kingdom is being established for Him, than with the idea of His establishing it Himself.[2] Oecumenius attempts to justify the divergence on the ground that St. Paul feared lest the Son should be thought to be greater than the Father, and so he afterwards ascribed all things to the Father, saying *He hath put,* to show that the power comes to the Son from the Father.

The final subjection is represented as the complete fulfilling of the Father's will, through the liberation of the kingdom from all rebellion and tyranny.

That God may be all in all signifies the abolition of sin, the allegiance of men being no longer divided between God and their passions.

Theophylact borrows his exposition from Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus. The only new point which he adds is that, since the idea of the Greeks was that Jupiter had rebelled against his father Saturn, and had ejected him from his kingdom, St. Paul emphasizes the

[1] *Ad loc.*, Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 869. [2] See above, p. 9.

fact that the Father remains supreme, as the only causeless first cause.[1]

(*b*) Western Writers

Hilary deals with the subject at length in his treatise on the Trinity. He has in his mind both the Arian theory that the subjection of Christ signifies loss of power or enfeebling of Divinity, and the Marcellian theory that it betokens dissolution of nature.[2]

He argues that *the end* is not dissolution but the ultimate condition, as, for example, in Mt. v. 17, x. 22; Phil. iii. 19;[3] that the delivery of the kingdom (i.e. the saints, whom Christ as King delivers to the Father) does not involve loss or surrender, for the Father still possesses what He delivered to the Son (Mt. xxviii. 18; Lc. x., 22):[4] and that the subjection is no new act of obedience, but a demonstration of the *Mystery*, a particular instance of the voluntary obedience which led to the Incarnation and Crucifixion.[5] It is to be explained in the light of the Incarnation. It signifies the absorption of the human in the Divine, the swallowing up of the body in the spiritual nature, the promotion of humanity in Christ; and it is in this sense that God will become *all in all.*[6]

Hilary appears to have regarded our Lord's human nature as dispensational only. It is true, he attempts to distinguish between dissolution and transfiguration, and maintains that there is not to be a casting off of the human body of Christ, but only a transformation of it; but the fact remains that he believed in the ultimate

[1] See Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 765.
[2] *De Trin.*, xi. *cc.* 21, 25; Migne, *P.L.*, x. 414, 417.
[3] *Ibid.*, c. 28.
[4] *Ibid.*, c. 29.
[5] *Ibid.*, c. 30.
[6] *Ibid.*, c. 49.

abolition of all traces of Christ's human nature. He who is now in glory both God and Man will become altogether God.[1]

> *Shall He bestow on us the form of His glorified body, and yet be able to do for His own body nothing more than He does for Himself in common with us?* [2]

Jerome refers with approval to Hilary's exposition, but does not follow it himself.

His own interpretation of the subjection is that Christ will be subject in His Church, which is a very different conception from that of the absorption of Christ's humanity.

He understands the words *that God may be all in all* to mean that humanity will be subject to the Godhead. The saints will severally possess all virtues, and each will possess Christ in His entirety, whereas now Christ is only partly in each, manifesting Himself, for example, as generosity in David, and as wisdom in Solomon.[3]

Jerome's agreement with Hilary does not appear to get beyond the position that the subjection will be *juxta dispensationem carnis assumtae.* It probably appeared to him to be greater than it was, in consequence of their common opposition to Arianism.

Moreover, this lack of accuracy is the less remarkable, because Jerome did not always agree with himself. Writing to Amandus he adopts the view that Christ will be subject in His body, the Church ; but in the exposition

[1] For Augustine's criticism of this view, see below, pp. 91 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, c. 43.

[3] *Epist.* lv. *Ad Amand.; Opera,* Tom. i, 298., Ed. Vall. Veron. Comp. *Dial. contra Pelag., c.* 18 ; *Opera,* Tom. ii. 699. The influence of Origen can be traced here. See above, p. 77.

of 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff., which he gives in his commentary, he classes that interpretation amongst several others which he enumerates as current, while he appears to adopt as his own the conception that the subjection will be a personal manifestation of love.

Thus he writes :—

> *Quibus (i.e. Arianis) respondendum est : subjectionem non semper ad diminutionem honoris pertinere, sed etiam ad caritatis officium. . . . Multi sane de hoc capitulo diversa senserunt. Nam quidam dicunt, sicut in suis esurientibus esurit, vel cibatur, ita et in Ecclesiae (quae est corpus ejus) ipse subjecitur. Alii aiunt etc.*[1]

Ambrose interprets the subjection as referring to the assumed humanity through which Christ subjects all things to Himself, and in which He is subject to the Father. It is the subjection of obedience such as He manifested in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lc. xxii. 42 ; Phil. ii. 8), which is akin even to His subjection to His earthly parents (Lc. ii. 51).[2]

Christ receives no hurt from being called a servant, or from being said to have been crucified, or from being spoken of as having died ; [3] and the statement that He will be subject does not affect His glory as God. In respect of the Godhead, the Nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, and subjection has no place ; but through the Son's participation in human nature there will be a complete subjection of will and heart, that God may be all to us. As we sit with Him *in the heavenlies* through His assumption of our nature, so He will

[1] *Opera,* Tom. xi. 944. Ed. Vall. Ver.
[2] *In Ps.* lxi. 2 ; Migne, *P.L.,* xiv. 1169.
[3] Comp. Jerome, *Epist.* lv. ; *Opera,* Tom. i. 298, Ed. Ver.

be subject in us, and for our sake, in *the sacrament of His Body*. And God will be *all in all* when all opposition to Him has been removed by the obedience of all to Christ.[1]

Augustine regards the statement of the final subjection as belonging to the same category as the words *My Father is greater than I*. According to the *regula catholicae fidei* such passages are to be understood as referring to the Incarnation (*secundum susceptionem hominis intelligantur*).[2] The interpretation depends on the question whether the subjection is predicated of Christ *secundum personarum proprietates*, or as Incarnate. The context decides in favour of the latter, inasmuch as it treats of the resurrection.

The delivery of the kingdom means the making manifest that the Father reigns, in accordance with that manner of speech by which a thing which always is, is said to be accomplished when it begins to be known and seen.[3]

Augustine regards as possible and reasonable the interpretation which treats Christ's subjection as representative; but while allowing that the passage may

[1] *De Fide*, v. 14; Migne, *P.L.*, xvi. 682 ff.

[2] *Lib. de divers. quaest., c.* lxix.; *Opera*, Tom. vi. 104 ff., Ed. Bened., Paris, 1837. This statement does not fully represent Augustine's treatment of such passages. He admits elsewhere, as an alternative interpretation, that they may refer to the fact that the Father is alone unoriginate. *Filius Patri debet quod est, hoc etiam debens utique Patri quod eidem Patri aequalis aut par est; Pater autem nulli debet quid-quid est.* In other words, they may be indications of the eternal subordination (in order, not in nature or degree). Cf. *De Fid. et Symb., c.* 18; *Opera*, Tom. vi. 273.

[3] Augustine gives as an illustration *Hallowed be Thy Name*, i.e. *sanctum esse innotescat. Ibid.*, col. 107.

thus refer to Christ and His members (*universus Christus*), he himself inclines to the conception of the Father's rule being acknowledged by all His enemies, through the work of Christ.[1]

Augustine explains ἕως in a somewhat different way from that of Eusebius, Jerome and others. He agrees with them in repudiating the idea that it determines the end of Christ's kingdom, but he gives it a determinative sense in a different relation. The kingdom will end in the sense that the necessity for the particular manner of the exercise will cease. Christ will bring the kingdom to such manifestation that it will no longer be able to be denied by His enemies, and manifestation cannot get beyond that.[2] The same thought is expressed somewhat differently in a passage in the *De Trinitate*, where ἕως is interpreted as indicating the final stage of bliss beyond which there can be no further advance.[3]

The final subjection is not to be interpreted as a conversion of humanity into Deity.[4] Subjection to a thing is to be distinguished from change into it. Christ will be subject as Man.

What wonder, since that human form will remain in the Son, by which He is always inferior to the Father? [5]

Augustine maintains that the statement of the subjection, so far from indicating the absorption of the humanity, was intended to prove the very opposite, viz. *that the human spirit and body were not to perish by any such conversion. . . .*

[1] *Op. cit.*, col. 111. [2] *Ibid.*, col. 107 f.

[3] *De Trin.*, i. 8; *Opera*, Tom. viii. 1169.

[4] Hilary is not mentioned, but it is obvious that his interpretation was in Augustine's mind. See above, p. 87.

[5] *Contra Serm. Arian.*, 37; *Opera*, Tom. viii. 993.

The subjection is the proof of the eternal humanity of Christ.[1]

That God may be all in all signifies that the Divine Nature will suffice for the possession of life, and for the satisfying of our desires in good things.

> *For then God will be all in all, when we shall have begun to wish to possess nothing besides Him. For He will be all things to us, when, with Him satisfying us, nothing will be wanting.*[2]

Cassian seems to have been influenced by the unguarded language of Hilary. Each of them held opinions which were undoubtedly a species of monophysitism, though not in its developed form as condemned at Chalcedon.

Cassian's words are :—

> *We no longer know Christ according to the flesh, because when bodily infirmity has been absorbed by Divine majesty, nothing remains in that sacred Body, from which weakness of the flesh can be known in it. And thus whatever formerly belonged to a two-fold substance, has become attached to a single Power, since there is no sort of doubt that Christ, Who was crucified through human weakness, lives entirely through the glory of His Divinity.*[3]

In the light of such a passage as this, it might have been expected that the words *that God may be all in all*

[1] Cf. *Coll. cum Max. Opera*, Tom. viii. 1019; *De Trin.*, i. 8. *Ibid.* 1166.

The statement that all things shall be subject to Christ is similarly explained in the light of the Incarnation. *Secundum id quod sine tempore Deus natus est, nihil unquam potuit ei non esse subjectum. Contra Max.*, ii. 18, 5; *Opera*, Tom. viii. 1102.

[2] *Contra Serm. Arian.*, *c.* 37.

[3] *De Incarn.*, iii. 3; Migne, *P.L.*, l. 54.

would have been interpreted by Cassian as signifying the absorption of Christ's humanity in the Godhead. But it was not so. Cassian followed Jerome's interpretation of the phrase, and explained it as meaning that the fulness of the virtues of Christ would be in each of the saints.[1]

Eucherius interprets Christ's delivery of the kingdom as signifying our advancement.

> *Traditurus quidem, sed tamen non ita traditurus ut careat. Traditio enim regni nostra provectio est tunc cum esse ex integro Filii metuerimus in Patris regno.*[2]

Leo the Great regards the mystical union with Christ, which the believer now enjoys, as an earnest of the condition which St. Paul had in mind when he wrote the words *that God may be all in all.* He explains the passage as referring to the eventual reconciliation of all things to God (Col. i. 18 ff.) through Christ, Who is Himself God, and in Whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead.[3]

Walafridus Strabo interprets the words *that God may be all in all* as meaning that every creature will confess God to be the Supreme Head and ultimate Source of all things.

> *Cum dicet omnis creatura Christum esse suum caput, Christi autem caput Deum, non tantum in omnibus, id est in confessione omnium, unus erit Deus, sed et omnis creatura fatebitur ipsum esse ex quo sunt omnia.*[4]

[1] *Inst.*, v. 4; Migne, *P.L.*, xlix. 208.
[2] *Instruct. ad Sal.*, *c.* i.; Migne, *P.L.*, L. 805.
[3] *Serm.*, lxiii., *c.* 3; Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 355.
[4] See Migne, *P.L.*, cxiv. 547.

Petrus Damianus says that the delivery of the kingdom does not mean either that the Father did not have it before, or that the Son will not have it after, but that the Son brings the believer to the contemplation of the Father.[1]

Luther maintains that there are two kingdoms of Christ, the one spiritual, the other earthly. The former is permanent, and is to be delivered to the Father; the latter (established for the evil and for the good) is temporal and will be utterly abolished.[2]

There are two phases of the spiritual kingdom. Christ administers it now on earth through faith; He reigns not visibly and openly but invisibly through His word. As, when the sun shines through clouds, we see the light, but the sun itself hardly at all, and when the clouds are dispersed, we see the light and the sun equally joined together in one substance, so Christ reigns now with the Father in a dark and hidden manner. We see no more of His kingdom than Baptism and the Eucharist; we hear no more of it than the external word. But, when He has handed over the kingdom, it will cease to be hidden and to be apprehended by faith. Christ will then set His own before God the Father, and will transfer us openly into the kingdom which He has prepared.

[1] See Migne, *P.L.*, cxlv. 905.

Comp. Neale's translation of one of Bernard of Cluny's hymns:

And when the Sole-Begotten
Shall render up once more
The Kingdom to the Father
Whose own it was before

. . . .
. . . .

And there the Sole-Begotten
Is Lord in regal state.

Mediaeval Hymns, pp. 71, 85.

[2] *Comment. in* 1 *ad Cor.*; *Opera*, Tom. v. 154, Ed. Wit, 1554.

The kingdom is both of Christ and of God, but it is properly spoken of as Christ's kingdom since the Father can now only be known in Christ. In the future age it will properly be called the kingdom of God, since then there will be the open vision of His Majesty.

Luther explains *donec* (ἕως) in its exclusive sense, regarding it as determining the end of the earthly kingdom which goes on side by side with the spiritual administration until all the faithful have been gathered in.

Melanchthon similarly distinguishes the kingdoms of Christ and of the Father. By the former he understands the dispensational activity of Christ in collecting and saving the Church ; by the latter, the immediate sovereignty of God. The delivery of the kingdom signifies the manifestation of the completed mediatorial work.[1]

Bradford, in one of his meditations,[2] explains the delivery of the kingdom as meaning the end of Christ's mediatorial work.

> *Oh great prerogative to see Christ as He is ! which is not to be considered so much for the manhood, as for the Godhead itself, as Paul doth also write, that " when all things are subject unto the Son, then shall He be subject unto Thee," dear Father, also " that God may be all in all." And therefore Christ our Saviour prayed for us, " that we might know Thee the only true God " ; not that our Christ, Thy Son, is not with Thee the true, coequal and consubstantial God, but that we might now know how that, after the Judgment, such a mystery of the mediatorship shall not be in heaven as is now on earth. Then Thou, blessed Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, shalt " be all in all."*

[1] *In* 1 *ad Cor. ; Opera*, p. 156, Ed. Witt, 1564.
[2] *Sermons, Meditations*, pp. 271 f. P.S.

Thou shalt be the end of our desires ; Thou shalt be looked upon without end ; Thou shalt be loved without loathing : Thou shalt be praised without weariness.

Calvin speaks of Christ as the One *in Whom the Father determines to be exalted, and by Whose mediation He chooses to reign.* The exaltation of Christ to *the right hand* is the inauguration of His government of heaven and earth, and the solemn entrance upon the actual administration of the power committed to Him.[1] God becomes *all in all* when Christ's mediatorial Priesthood and Kingship have completely fulfilled their purpose.[2]

This attaches a reasonable significance to the idea of Christ handing over the kingdom and becoming subject to the Father. But Calvin is inconsistent when he says that the only design of the Apostles in their frequent mention of the Session is to teach that all things are committed to Christ's government.[3] In the same context he mentions other conceptions which are associated with the Session in the New Testament.[4]

Coverdale similarly explains the delivery of the kingdom as the cessation of the mediatorial work.

When He shall have rooted out all sin in His elect, overcoming death the last enemy, so that God shall be "all in all," then shall Christ also give up His kingdom unto God the Father, namely, the mediation for our sins, the purging of the same, defence against the devil, and deliverance from death. For then shall there be no more sin in the elect, so that He shall not need to be mediator

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[1] *Institutes*, ii. 15 ; Engl. Transl., vol. i. p. 416, Ed. Allen, 1844.

[2] See his comment on 1 *Cor.* xv. 28 ; *Epp. to Cor.*, vol. ii. p. 33, Engl. Transl. Pringle.

[3] *Institutes*, ii. 15 ; vol. i. p. 416.

[4] *Institutes*, ii. 16, vol. i. p. 417.

for them, to purge from sin, to defend against the devil, or to deliver from death.[1]

Beza agrees with Augustine's interpretation of the delivery of the kingdom as signifying the completion of Christ's work and the making manifest that the Father is King.

Quid ergo? an nondum regnat Pater? Regnat certe, sed ita ut, quoniam adhuc magna mundi pars et potestates tenebrarum ei resistunt, hoc respectu videatur rex non esse, quoniam pro rege a plerisque non habetur: ideoque quotidie petimus ut regnum ipsius adveniat. Dicitur ergo Christus regnum Deo Patri traditurus, id est, debellatis omnibus hostibus Patrem velut in regnum plane constituturus, videlicet respectu eorum qui ab ipso desciverant, quorum alios perdomuerit, alios Patri reconciliaverit ultimo demum illo die, quo profligatis omnibus ad unum hostibus, omnes quos a Patre gubernandos accepit, illi veluti in manus tradet aeterna gloria coronandos. An vero tunc non regnabit Filius? Maxime vero cum regni ejus non sit finis.[2]

Beza's explanation of the subjection of Christ is certainly wrong. Like many others before him he limits the reference to Christ in His representative capacity. He maintains that to explain it of Christ in His own Person is to ignore the context which speaks of our resurrection and glory with Christ.

But he falls into the peculiar error of treating it as though it were the present experience instead of the future state. The subjection, he says, is due, in part, to the Church's weakness and ignominy, and, in part, to the fact that the kingdom is not yet manifest, seeing that

[1] *Works, Fruitful Lessons*, p. 385, P.S.

[2] Beza, *ad loc.*; *Nov. Test.*, p. 506, Ed. Cantab., 1642.

the number of Christ's members is still incomplete, and many lie in dust and corruption. In other words, Beza regards the subjection of Christ as a state which precedes the delivery of the kingdom, whereas St. Paul asserts that it is a consequence of the delivery.

That God may be all in all is explained of the subjection of His enemies, the completion of the number of the elect, the removal of darkness and sin amongst the living, and the resurrection of the dead.[1]

Grotius illustrates the delivery of the kingdom by the conception of an ambassador laying down His work but retaining the honour of His office.

> *Erit sicut legatus qui deposito legationis onere dignitatem retinet.*[2]

Bengel notes the emphasis which the word *Himself* introduces into the passage. It determines the reference to Christ in His own Person, but in respect of the Incarnation, and not of His Godhead. The subjection manifests the excellence of the Son, who of His own will thus glorifies the Father.[3]

> *"Ipse" hic facit antitheton ad "omnia," ut infinita denotetur excellentia Filii: et praeterea ut saepe, significat quiddam voluntarium; nam Filius se subordinat Patri, Pater Filium glorificat. Gloriosius est nomen Dei et Patris, et Filii, quam Regis. Hoc nomen ab illo absorbebitur, ut antea ex illo fluxerat. Nec tamen hic sermo est de Filio, quatenus Pater et Filius unum sunt, quae quidem unitas essentiae hic praesupponitur; sed respectu occonomiae, quatenus Pater ei omnia subordi-*

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 507.

[2] *Opera*, Tom. ii. 822, Ed. Amst., 1679, quoted by G. C. Knapp. See below, p. 100.

[3] *Gnomon N.T., ad loc.*

navit. Filius Patri subordinabitur eo modo, quo antea non fuerat subordinatus, namque in regno mediatorio separatus quodammodo fulgor Filii a Patre fuerat: deinceps autem Filius Patri plane subordinabitur: eaque subordinatio Filii erit plane voluntaria, ipsi Filio optata atque gloriosa: non enim subordinabitur veluti minister, sed tanquam Filius.

That God may be all in all is explained as referring to the abolition of all distinctions of race, of all principalities and power, of all infirmity and sin.

G. C. Knapp explains St. Paul's words as referring only to the earthly kingdom which will come to an end with the general resurrection.

When Christ has overcome all difficulties and hindrances and has brought men at last to eternal happiness, then indeed He ought to be seen to have clearly satisfied His own counsels and the Divine commands: then His labour and cares will have an end, which, by the order and authority of the Father, He, as Mediator and Saviour, had undertaken for the sake of men. Then He will submit Himself to the Father, Whose rule all things obey: He will abdicate His office given to Him by the Father, and will willingly commit the care and government of His own to Him alone. Then God Himself by Himself, with no one intervening, will govern His Church, which before He had ruled through Christ as by a representative and interpreter. Then indeed men will be joined to God, they will see God as it were face to face, and will enjoy in the seats of the blessed everlasting felicity. And so they will no longer need a Saviour or Mediator, by Whom they may be brought to happiness. But Jesus, who has rendered such conspicuous service to mankind,

will be (to quote Grotius) as it were "legatus qui deposito legationis onere dignitatem retinet." [1]

Olshausen similarly explains Christ's delivery of the kingdom as referring to the termination of His mediatorial and dispensational government.[2]

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth distinguishes Christ's mediatorial kingdom which He has as man from the eternal kingdom which He has as God.

The Session at the right hand is the actual exercise of that regency and dominion wherein the manhood of Christ is joined to the Deity of the Son of God. This exercise will cease, there being no longer on earth any militant Church to govern. But the cessation of mediatorship will not mean that Christ ceases to be King. It was to withstand this idea that the words were added to the Creed: *whose kingdom shall have no end.*

In other words, the delivery of the kingdom and the subjection of Christ imply no change in the Person of Christ or in His relation to the Father; they refer only to the close of the Dispensation.[3]

Alford interprets the delivery of the kingdom as referring to the mediatorial kingdom which, by Divine appointment, is not to be eternal. But he does not limit the reference of the subjection of the Son to that. He regards 1 Cor. xv. 28 as introducing something additional, viz. an assertion of the ultimate subordination of the Son, which has for its purpose the recognition of the Father as sole Lord and King.

Alford follows Meyer in explaining *When he saith* (ver. 27) as referring not to the original oracle, but to the declaration of God, which is yet future, that the subjection

[1] *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 66.
[2] *Ad loc.* [3] See *The New Testament in Greek, ad loc.*

of all things to Christ has been accomplished. His translation of the passage is :—

> *When God shall have declared that all things have been subjected to Him, it is evident that they have been subjected with the exception of Him Who subjected all things to Him.*[1]

Godet refers the kingdom to the Messianic reign, which will cease when every enemy capable of separating God and man has been subdued.

> *It has for its essential object the carrying out of this judgment on the opposing powers which still remain after the Advent.*

Godet thinks that the kingdom here referred to will begin at the Advent, and will last during the period of the Judgment.

He explains the subjection of Christ in the light of His eternal relationship to the Father. The conception of the subordination of the Son to the Father was part of St. Paul's Christology. This is implied no less than His pre-existence and equality by the titles *Son* and *Word*. And if this was the relation in eternity, how much more after the Incarnation? Hence, when the mediatorial sovereignty has accomplished its particular purpose, the original relation of subordination will be resumed. Christ will not descend from the throne, but He will raise His subjects to it (Apoc. iii. 21), and will become (instead of King surrounded by servants) Elder Brother surrounded by brethren.

The Son will efface Himself to let God take His place. Formerly it was He, Christ, in Whom God manifested

[1] *The Greek Test.*, vol. ii. p. 611, Ed. 1877. This interpretation has the advantage of giving to the aorist subjunctive (εἴπῃ) its proper significance after a particle with ἄν (ὅταν).

Himself to the world : it was He Who was all in all (Col. iii. 12). But He was this only for the purpose of bringing the faithful to that state in which God could directly, without the mediation of the Son, dwell in them, reveal Himself to them, and act by them.

God in ver. 28 is the Godhead, in the fulness of His Being, at once as Father the Source of all, both in Himself and in the Universe, as Son revealing Him, and as Spirit communicating Him.

All in all means not merely that God is all to them (i.e. to their hearts), but that God is in them, thinks, wills, and acts through them.

Do the words *all in all* imply universal salvation ? Godet regards the idea as unnecessary, and improbable. The reference either may be to the faithful only (as explained above), or may include the reprobate, in whom the Divine perfection will shine forth in the two-fold aspect of justice and power.[1]

Bishop Moule writes :—

This royalty is not for a moment a supersession of the Eternal Father's action. But in it the Incarnate Son, one with the Father, is the Divine Agent of the Father's will for the great special purpose of carrying into its eternal issues the plan of redemption, to the glory of the Father in the Son. It has respect to God's final triumph over sin and death, and to the glorification in it of His Church. When sin and death shall be " put under the feet " of the Son, this royalty will have done its glorious work. In respect of it " the Son Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him." Whatever that supreme crisis means, it will be no eclipse of the glory of the Son. The eternal kingdom is " the

[1] See Godet, *ad loc.*, English Translation, vol. ii. pp. 357 ff.

Kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v. 5) : *the throne is "of God and of the Lamb"* (Apoc. xxii. 3).[1]

Dr. Findlay expresses the passage in a similar way :—

Christ will present to the Father a realm dominated by His will and filled with His obedient sons. This is no ceasing of Christ's rule, but the inauguration of God's eternal kingdom. . . . At the συντέλεια *"the throne of God and of the Lamb," "the Kingdom of Christ and of God" fills the New Testament horizon.*

He maintains that Christ is the subject of εἴπῃ, not God speaking in Scripture, or at the end of the world, nor the prophet.

"All things are subdued" is the joyful announcement by the Son that the grand promise recorded in the eighth Psalm is fulfilled.

He says that ver. 28 affirms no subjection of the Son that is not involved in Sonship.

This implies no inferiority of nature, no extrusion from power, but the free submission of love, which is the essence of the filial spirit that actuated Christ from first to last.

The words *that God may be all in all* express the loyal purpose of the Son in His self-subjection.

His submission exhibits the unity of the Godhead, and constitutes itself the focus and uniting bond of a universe in which God's will is everywhere regnant and His being everywhere immanent.[2]

Robertson and Plummer regard the exact meaning of the delivery of the kingdom as beyond our comprehension, but they explain the general purpose of the passage in the following words :—

[1] *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 106.

[2] *Ad loc., The Expositor's Greek Testament.*

Sovereignty has been committed to the Son for a definite purpose: and when that purpose has been fulfilled, the sovereignty returns to the original source. We need not think of Christ as losing anything, or ceasing to rule, but as bringing to a triumphant conclusion a special dispensation. It is His work to put an end to all that opposes the sovereignty of God. When all opposition is brought to nought, the Divine sovereignty, in which the Son shares, will be complete, and the reign of God, which is the reign of love, will no more have let or hindrance.

They explain ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ, as the proclamation of God at some future time; and *that God may be all in all* as meaning that God will fulfil all relations in all creatures, without the intervention of a mediator.[1]

Professor Swete distinguishes between the two kingdoms, the eternal kingdom which the Son has as one with the Father, and of which *there shall be no end*, and the temporary kingdom or regency, which takes *for the time the place of direct government.*

It is this *temporary economy, a parenthesis in God's great scheme of things, called for by the lapse of a part of the creation from its obedience to the Divine King*, which is referred to by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff. The Son will not *retain the authority* given to Him as Christ, but *as the Incarnate Son He will lead creation in the final subjection to the Father, which fulfils the purpose of the Christian economy.*

"*That God may be all in all*" refers not to the Father alone, but to *God in the fulness of the Divine Name, His Name hallowed, His Kingdom come, His will done, as in heaven so on earth.*[2]

[1] *Ad loc., Int. Crit. Comm.*

[2] *The Ascended Christ*, pp. 32 f. Cf. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 428.

CHAPTER III

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

A. Propitiation

Jesus the Saviour reigns,
The God of truth and love ;
When He had purged our stains,
He took His seat above.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice ;
Rejoice, again, I say, rejoice.

Charles Wesley.

THE Session of Christ is related in Holy Scripture to His priestly office and work in two ways : (1) as signifying the completeness of His propitiatory offering ; (2) as indicating the mode of His intercessory work.

Each of these aspects of the doctrine enters largely into the history of its interpretation.

The controversies which have arisen in the Church about the nature of our Lord's propitiatory offering, and the relation in which the Lord's Supper stands to it, belong in the main to the history of Western thought. Two peculiarities of Western Christendom may be regarded as the causes of this phenomenon. In the first place there was the comparatively late acceptance of the Epistle to the Hebrews. When we remember that the doctrine of our Lord's Priesthood receives its most explicit treatment in that Epistle, we can have little doubt that the lack of recognition of the Epistle in the West during

the first three centuries seriously affected the treatment of the subject. The fact, for example, that the Epistle is not quoted by Cyprian must be taken into account, if a true estimate is to be formed of his theory of Christian Priesthood. In the second place there is the fact that after the West had come to accept the Epistle as part of the Canon of Scripture, it depended almost entirely, until the Reformation Period, upon the Vulgate, which contains serious translational inaccuracies. The influence which Jerome, through the Vulgate, exerted upon Western theology was so great, that it is necessary for our immediate purpose to examine his rendering of certain of the passages which bear upon the subject.

In Heb. i. 3, *καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν* (*when He had made purification for sins, He took His seat*) is translated by *purgationem peccatorum faciens sedit.*

In Heb. x. 11, Jerome renders *πᾶς μὲν ἱερεὺς ἕστηκεν* by *omnis quidem sacerdos praesto est*, ignoring the emphatic contrast between the posture of standing for propitiatory ministration, and that of session, which signifies its completion.[1] Moreover, he weakens the force of the aorist participle *προσενέγκας* by the translation *offerens*.[2]

[1] See E. C. Wickham, *ad loc.* (*Westminster Commentaries*).

[2] The obscuring of the sense of the passage will be seen at once by putting the original and the translation side by side.

Πᾶς μὲν ἱερεὺς ἕστηκεν καθ' ἡμέραν λειτουργῶν καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς πολλάκις προσφέρων θυσίας, αἵτινες οὐδέποτε δύνανται περιελεῖν ἁμαρτίας· οὗτος δὲ μιὰν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ.

Omnis quidem sacerdos praesto est cotidie ministrans et easdem saepe offerens hostias quae numquam possunt auferre peccata ; Hic autem unam pro peccatis offerens hostiam in sempiternum sedit in dextera Dei.

It should be noticed that a similar rendering (*praesto fuit*) is found in ch. vii. 13, for *προσέσχηκεν*, which shows that Jerome

Again, in Heb. viii. 3, where the original is ambiguous Jerome has imported a significance which the context seems to forbid. He translates *ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσενέγκῃ* by *necesse est et hunc habere aliquid quod offerat.*[1]

failed to perceive the special significance of ἔστηκεν in ch. x. 11.

Jerome's use of the Latin present participle in these passages as the equivalent of the Greek aorist participle may not have had any doctrinal intention behind it. It may have been merely a vivid representation of past action. Instances of such use were not infrequent. A case in point is the Vulgate translation of Heb. i. 1, where no other explanation is possible: *Multifarie et multis modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis, novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio.* Further instances of this use in the Epistle to the Hebrews will be found in iii. 16, v. 7, vi. 15, ix. 11, x. 28, 36, xi. 13, 31. It is not invariable (comp. ix. 12), but the frequency of its occurrence points to a modification of the classical usage. See also Mc. i. 29, 35, iii. 13; Acts xiv. 20.

Other illustrations of the use in Ecclesiastical Latin are:—

Redemptione hominum perfecta, resurgenti ex mortuis, et in caelum ascendenti Domino Filio dicit Dominus, Pater scilicet; sede a dextris meis. See Migne, *P.G.*, xxxix. 1538.

Illi sacerdotes Judaerum multas quotidie offerendo hostias, non potuerant auferre peccata: Christus autem semel semetipsum offerens, abstulit peccata mundi; sedet nunc in gloria Dei Patris. See Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii. 750.

Sed hic ponitifex Christus offerens hostiam non repetitam, sed unam solam pro peccatis omnium sedet, id est quiescit et regnat positus in dextra. See Migne, *P.L.*, cliii. 527.

But Jerome's adoption of the present participle in passages where accuracy was particularly desirable must at least be regarded as unfortunate. For an instance of misinterpretation caused by the inaccuracy, we may notice Lanfranc's exposition of Heb. i. 3 (*exhibendo humanitatem quam assumpsit pro nobis*), which confuses the completed propitiation with the perpetual intercession. Migne, *P.L.*, cl. 376. See also the translation of Heb. i. 3, x. 12 in the Douay Bible: . . . *making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand . . . ; . . . but this man, offering one sacrifice for sins, for ever sitteth on the right hand. . . .* Such renderings would have been impossible if the version had been a translation of the Old Latin.

[1] Jerome's rendering is not supported by the Old Latin or by

The introduction of *est* is unfortunate as suggesting continual offering, whereas the context declares that the offering was completed on Calvary (comp. ch. vii. 27). Moreover, the present subjunctive *offerat* is an unsatisfactory equivalent for the aorist προσενέγκῃ.[1] Neither the language, nor the context sanction the idea of a necessity for continual propitiatory offering.

The translation is capable of an interpretation which is consistent with the assertion of completed offering, viz., as the statement of principle in terms of time; and in a later passage (ch. ix. 23), where the same ambiguity has been treated in a similar way, this is the only possible interpretation. But it is highly improbable that Jerome put this construction on his words.[2]

With these instances before us, we can appreciate Beza's criticism of the current edition of the Vulgate, as often departing from the Greek and often obscure in its interpretation.[3]

the Syriac. It is followed by Erasmus; but Beza represents the position of Reformation theology, when he maintains that the one offering had been already spoken of (Heb. vii. 27) as perfected and completed; the writer could not therefore speak of it now as going on and incomplete. He only shows how necessary it was that Christ should have Himself to offer, as He had done. Cf. Beza, *ad loc. Nov. Test,* p. 674, Ed. Cantab., 1642.

[1] Comp. Bp. Westcott: *This offering is described as made once for all* (προσενέγκῃ *contrasted with* προσφέρῃ, *ix.* 25; *comp. c. vii.* 27). The *Epistle to the Hebrews,* p. 215.

[2] See below, p. 116.

[3] *Vulgatae illius editionis, qua jam pridem utimur, quis auctor fuerit, video inter doctos homines non constare. Hoc quidem constat, praeterquam quod plurimis locis a librariis est depravata, saepe illam a Graecis discedere, saepe obscure multa interpretari, quaedam praetermittere, quaedam adficere; ut eam minime mirum sit eruditis hominibus nunquam satisfacere, imperitis autem multos magnos errores objecisse.* See the second prefatory address to Queen Elizabeth, *Nov. Test.,* Ed. Cant., 1642.

The point which particularly concerns us now is the influence which the Vulgate has exerted on the Western interpretation of the Session in its relation to the propitiatory offering. It is not too much to say that it prevented many writers from understanding the references to the subject in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and was in no small measure responsible for the development of the mediaeval conception of a continual propitiatory offering whether by Christ Himself in the heavenly sanctuary, or by Christ through His priests at the altars on earth.

Sacrificial language, it is true, was used of the Lord's Supper as early as in the second century. This was largely due to a false exegesis of Mal. i. 11, which was frequently quoted by early writers in this connexion, and was doubtless supposed to justify the use of language which finds no place in the pages of the New Testament.[1] Such language, however, did not in those early days carry with it the conception that the offering on Calvary was incomplete, or that the Eucharist was itself a propitiatory ordinance.

But before we enter upon a closer examination of the influence of the Vulgate upon Western thought, it will be well to notice the treatment of the subject by Eastern writers who were untrammelled by the errors and obscurities of a translation of the New Testament.

(*a*) Eastern Writers

Didymus of Alexandria treats the Session as the proof of completed redemption, and the symbol of participation in the Father's sovereignty.

His words are :—

The Lord (*i.e. the Father*) *said to the Lord,* (*i.e. the*

[1] Reference may be made to the writer's *Christ and the Nations*, pp. 90 ff., for a fuller treatment of this point. Comp. below, pp. 111 ff.

Son) when He had completed the redemption (πληρώσαντι τὴν οἰκονομίαν, redemptione hominum perfecta), and had risen from the dead, and had ascended into heaven, "Sit thou at my right hand." [1]

Chrysostom taught most emphatically that propitiation was a thing of the past. Completed propitiation is the starting point in his explanation of Christ's intercession. He writes :—

He who of His own power set free those who were condemned . . . and made them righteous and sons, and led them to the very highest honours . . . how should He, after having achieved all this, and having shown our nature on the King's throne, require to be a suppliant to do the easier things . . . ? There is no other reason for his having mentioned intercession, save that of showing the warmth and vigour of His love for us ; for the Father also is represented to us as beseeching men to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. v. 20).[2]

Chrysostom does not notice the Session as the proof of completed propitiation in Heb. i. 3, but he asserts it very plainly in his comments on ch. vii. His words are :—

When therefore you hear that He is a Priest, do not think that He is always exercising Priesthood : for once for all He exercised the priestly function, and after that He took His seat . . . for it belongs not to a minister to sit, but to stand. By this therefore He indicates the excellence of the sacrifice, which, though it was one, was sufficient, and having been offered once for all, had an efficacy which all the others together did not possess.[3]

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[1] *Exp. in Ps.* cix. 1 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxix. 1537.

[2] *In Ep. ad Rom.*, Hom. xv. ; *Opera*, Tom. ix. 660, Ed. Montfaucon, Par., 1837.

[3] *In Ep. ad Heb., Hom.* xiii. ; *Opera*, Tom. xii. 191 f.

In his comment on ch. viii. 1 Chrysostom compares ch. i. 14, and says :—

> *They do not hear the words, "sit at my right hand," because they are ministering spirits. But this he says, because He who sits is by no means a minister.*[1]

He notices the antithesis in ch. x. 11 f.[2]

> *So then standing is a sign of ministering : therefore sitting is a sign of being ministered to.*[3]

It might have been expected that one who could speak so emphatically as Chrysostom did about the uniqueness, completeness and sufficiency of Christ's propitiatory work, would have refrained from referring to the Lord's Supper in terms which (to say the least) were capable of being so interpreted as to suggest something quite different. And the fact that Chrysostom does use such language must be permitted to throw its light upon the sense in which it is to be understood in Patristic literature.

The principle of speech, according to which a sign may be spoken of in language which properly belongs only to the thing signified, was thoroughly understood by the

[1] *Op. cit. Hom.* xiv. Tom. xii. 199.

[2] The Latin translator gives *praesto est* (the Vulgate rendering of ἕστηκε) in the quotation from the Epistle, but introduces *stare* as the rendering of ἑστάναι· in the exposition. *Hom.* xviii. ; *ibid.* xii. 250.

[3] The same clear recognition of the teaching of the Epistle is found in one of the homilies which have been attributed to Chrysostom.

The author of the homily writes: *Therefore Paul, in order to show that Christ does not stand as a priest offering for Himself and for the people, but sits, says . . . ;* and there follow quotations of Heb. vii. 26 f., viii. 1, ix. 24 ff., and (without verbal accuracy) x. 11 f. In the Latin rendering of this last passage the translator gives *stant* where the Vulgate would have suggested *praesto sunt. Homil. in Incarn., Opera,* Tom. viii. 901.

Fathers of the Church. Augustine called attention to it as a matter of daily occurrence, which had to be specially borne in mind for a right understanding of sacramental language.[1] And Chrysostom leaves us in no doubt that his own use of sacrificial terms, in relation to the Eucharist, was based on the same principle. He says :—

> *What then? Do we not offer day by day? We do offer, but as making a remembrance*[2] (*ἀνάμνησιν*) *of His death. . . . We do not offer*[3] *another sacrifice, as the High Priest did formerly, but always the same: or rather, we make a remembrance of a sacrifice.*[4]

In other words, the Lord's Supper was spoken of as a sacrifice, not only in its relation to the sacrifice of praise, alms and of the worshipper himself, but also because it is a signification and commemoration of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. The conception of the Lord's Supper as being in itself a propitiatory sacrifice is not Patristic but mediaeval.

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth contends that, if these early writers could have foreseen mediaeval error, they

[1] *Ep. ad Bonif.*, xcviii. 9; *Opera*, Tom. ii. 400, Ed. Bened., Par., 1836.

[2] The Latin rendering of *ἀνάμνησιν ποιούμενοι* is *revocamus in memoriam*. *Opera*, Tom. xii. 241, Ed. Montfaucon, Par., 1838.

[3] Ποιοῦμεν. The context is sacrificial and therefore the word must be translated *we offer*. Ποιεῖν is in itself a colourless word which must always get its particular significance from its context, and cannot give a meaning to its context. Thus it may be translated *to bring forth*, in reference to fruit-bearing (Mt. iii. 8; Mc. iv. 32); *to spend*, in reference to time (Acts xv. 33, xx. 3); *to keep*, in reference to festivals (Mt. xxvi. 18); *to do*, in reference to commemorative acts (Lc. xxii. 19); *to offer*, in reference to sacrifices.

[4] Ἀνάμνησιν ἐργαζόμεθα θυσίας. The Latin here is *sacrificii facimus commemorationem*. *In Epis. ad Heb. Hom.*, xvii.; *Opera*, Tom. xii. 241. Quoted by Archbp. Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 454, P.S.

would have been more guarded in their use of sacrificial phraseology.[1]

Theodoret's comment on Heb. x. 12 is as follows :—

There then is both a multitude of priests, and a multitude of sacrifices, and no advantage. But here there is one, the same Person being both Priest and Sacrifice, and He has accomplished the remission of sins, and He needs no further ministry; but is seated together with the Father who has begotten Him, waiting for the end of this present life.[2]

Gennadius of Constantinople lays great stress on the completeness of Christ's propitiatory work. Commenting on Rom. viii. 34, he writes :—

What, saith he, dost thou still lack? No change is to be feared; it is finished; the work has come to an end; nothing is lacking in order that we may be safe. Christ died, yea rather rose again, and has obtained the highest honour with God, and Himself pours forth His grace towards us. That is to say, it is manifest by this very thing that Christ is calling us to Himself, and the whole will follow the firstfruits, and the rest of the Body will be given to the Head. For since He has been already exalted, His mission for our salvation having been fulfilled, He will draw us to Himself according to His promise.

There follows an explanation of the Intercession as a metaphor which is intended to give us full assurance.[3]

Oecumenius explains Heb. viii. 3 as referring to the offering once made on Calvary.

[1] See his comment on Heb. x. 12, *The N.T. in Greek*, p. 412, Ed. 1869. Comp. below, p. 136.

[2] Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 749. [3] Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxv. 1704.

Christ had His own flesh which He also offered. But this He said lest any one should say, If He is a High Priest for eternity why did He also die? Why? In order that He might offer Himself as the Victim. He died indeed that He might offer a victim, but rising from the dead He was received up, that He might have the very heavens as His place, where it behoves Him to exercise His priestly office (ἱερᾶσθαι).[1]

This priestly work Oecumenius explains as intercession. He refers to the antithesis of Heb. x. 11 f. in much the same language as that of Chrysostom, and insists on the perpetual efficacy of the completed offering.[2]

Theophylact adopts the same explanation of Heb. viii. 3. He regards the ambiguous ἀναγκαῖον as the equivalent of ἀναγκαῖον ἦν. The thing offered was the body of Christ, and the altar was the cross. The necessity of which the verse speaks was met by the death on Calvary.[3]

The antithesis of Heb. x. 11 f. is also noted, and explained in similar language to that of Chrysostom and Oecumenius.

Theophylact's comment on ἐκάθισεν is as follows: *He is not only High Priest, but also God. For after the completion of the work, on account of which He undertook to be called High Priest, He thereafter took His seat as God.*[4]

Euthymius Zigabenus includes the idea of rest among the various conceptions that must be associated with the Session.[5] That he thought of such rest in relation to

[1] Migne, *P.G.*, cxix. 361.

[2] In the Latin rendering of the passage *praesto est* (of the Vulgate) is replaced by *assistit.*

[3] *Exp. in Ep. ad Heb., ad loc.*; Migne, *P.G.*, cxxv. 288.

[4] *Op. cit.* 325. The Latin version of Theophylact's words ignores the Vulgate and gives *stat* as the equivalent of ἕστηκεν.

[5] Comp. *Comment. in Mc.* xvi. 19; Migne, *P.G.*, cxxix. 852: *Comment. in Ps.* cix. 1; Migne, cxxviii. 1084.

Christ's propitiatory work, seems to be made clear by his comments on Heb. x. 11 f., in which he refers to the contrast which the writer introduces between the Levitical Priests and Christ.

> *For they stand day by day ministering as servants, but He, when He had offered once for all, took His seat, as Master. And their offerings were both many and ineffective for the taking away of sins . . . but His was one and powerful and much more effective than the multitude of theirs.*[1]

It might be an over-statement of the case to assert that in Eastern Christology the doctrine of the Session was related in a conspicuous manner to the propitiatory work of Christ, but the foregoing evidence seems sufficient to justify at least the statement that the significance of the Session as a proof of completed propitiation was a feature of the Eastern interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(*b*) Western Writers

(1) *Before the Reformation*

The earliest post-Biblical allusion to the High Priestly work of Christ is Clement's phrase *the High Priest of all our offerings;* but the reference of the passage is to the intercessory work of Christ rather than to His propitiatory offering. The citation of Ps. cx. 1 and Heb. i. 13 shows that Clement had in mind the presence of Christ on the throne, as the means of the believer's access to God.[2]

Cyprian makes free use of sacrificial terms in his references to the Lord's Supper, but he dwells with equal emphasis on the completed propitiation of Christ. That which gives the Eucharist its sacrificial character is not

[1] *Ad loc. Comment. in Epp. S. Paul;* Tom. ii. p. 416, Ed. N. Calogeras, Ath., 1887.

[2] *Ep. ad Cor., c.* 36.

that it in any sense continues Christ's propitiatory work, or even represents the continuation of it in heaven, but that it commemorates and represents that which Christ did.[1]

It should be noted, however, that the position of Cyprian is independent of any expressed doctrine of the Session. He refers to the Session in its relation to the sovereignty of Christ,[2] and to the life of the believer,[3] but not in its relation to the completed propitiation. The reason doubtless was that the completeness of Christ's offering required no demonstration in Cyprian's day: it was part of the accepted opinion.[4]

Jerome's unfortunate use of the present participle in Heb. i. 3, x. 12 has been already noticed. Instances have also been given of a similar use in contexts where it can only be explained as a vivid representation of past action.[5]

It is doubtful, however, whether Jerome can be exonerated on that ground. His explanation of the perpetual intercession of Christ practically identifies it with a perpetual work of propitiation. His words are :—

[1] See, e.g. *Epist.* lxiii. 14; *Opera*, p. 713., Ed. Hartel, 1868.
[2] *Ad Quir. Test.*, ii. 26; *Opera*, p. 93.
[3] *Test.* iii. 11; *Opera*, p. 124.
[4] This point also explains the early use of language which at the time presented no difficulty, but was proved by events to have been unguarded and unwise. Athanasius, for example, did not hesitate to speak of Christ's sacrifice as *one which remains, and does not come to nought.* To us this savours of the mediaeval conception, simply because the latter is familiar to us; but, studied in its context, the expression is seen to mean nothing more than that Christ's offering is perpetual in its efficacy, as contrasted with the Levitical offerings which had to be continually repeated. Cf. Athan., *Orat. II contra Arian.*, *c.* 9; *Opera*, Tom. i. 477, Ed. Bened., 1698. See Bp. Wordsworth's Notes on Mal. i. 11, Heb. x. 12 in his *New Testament in the Greek.*
[5] See above, pp. 106 f.

He is said to intercede in that He ever shows to the Father as a pledge for us the manhood which He took, and offers [1] *it as a true and eternal High Priest.*[2]

It is quite possible that this conception of perpetual propitiation was in Jerome's mind when he introduced the present participles in Heb. i. 3, x. 12. If so, he was representing a fundamentally different idea from that of the completed propitiation which the aorist participles express.

Jerome's contemporary Ambrose not merely ignores the bearing of the Session upon the propitiatory work of Christ, but also confounds that work with His intercession. He writes :—

Formerly a lamb used to be offered, also a kid, now Christ is offered. But He is offered as man, as beset by suffering (quasi recipiens passionem); and He Himself, as priest offers Himself, in order to take away our sins, here in image, there in reality, where with the Father He mediates as an advocate for us.[3]

[1] The word *offert* need not in itself denote sacrificial action, but that Jerome used it with that meaning in this passage seems to be clear from the words which follow it. The meaning of *offerre* varies considerably in ecclesiastical usage. It may mean *to offer*, in a sacrificial sense ; *to exhibit* or *to put in evidence* (comp. Gregory Magnus, *In Prim. Reg. Exp., Lib.* i. *c.* 1 ; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxix. 45 : Walafrid. Strab., *In Ep. ad Rom.* viii. 34 ; Migne, *P.L.*, cxiv. 499) ; *to deliver*, as of Christ delivering the kingdom to the Father, i.e. showing that His labours are completed (comp. Melanchthon, *In I Ep. ad Cor.* xv. 24 ; *Opera*, p. 295, Ed. Witteb.) ; *to present*, as of a thing being presented on the page of Holy Scripture (comp. *honorabilis consessus offertur*, Alcuin, *Exp. in Ep. ad Heb.* viii. 2 ; Migne, *P.L.*, C. 1068) ; *to plead the merits of*, as of man pleading the merits of Christ (comp. Hooper, *Early Writings*, p. 50, P.S.).

[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.* ; *Opera*, Tom. xi. 872, Ed. Vall. Ver., 1742.

[3] *De off. Min.*, i, 48 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xvi. 94.

It seems then that by the fourth century Western thought had begun to diverge from the New Testament conception of completed propitiation. The foundation of the error had doubtless been laid by Cyprian's language; and it was only necessary to lose sight of his explanation in order to build up upon his teaching the superstructure of continual propitiation.

But the difference between Cyprian and Ambrose must be carefully noticed. The former insisted on the completion of Christ's propitiatory work, and used sacrificial language of the Eucharist because of its being the commemoration and representation of that completed work: but the latter assigned a sacrificial character to the Eucharist as being the earthly counterpart of Christ's continual offering in heaven.

Augustine appears to see no other significance in the metaphor of sitting than that of dwelling. The ideas of glory and happiness he gets from the phrase *at the right hand of God;* but session in itself signifies no more than dwelling or being.[1] He entirely ignores the significance of the Session in relation to the propitiatory work.

Leo the Great speaks of Christ's propitiation and of the atonement in language which properly belongs only to the Intercession.

He writes:—

> *In the Church of God there are neither valid priesthoods nor true sacrifices unless in the reality of our nature the true High Priest makes atonement for us, and the true Blood of the spotless Lamb makes us clean. For although He be set on the Father's right hand, yet in the same flesh which He took from the Virgin He carries on the mystery of propitiation, as says the Apostle: "Christ Jesus who*

[1] *Sermo* ccxiv. 8; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1377, Ed. Bened., Par., 1836.

died, yea, who also rose, who is on the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." [1]

Primasius gives a true exposition of Heb. i. 3, in spite of the Vulgate. He writes :—

The order of the words must be considered. First he showed that the Lord by His own suffering had procured cleansing for us ; and then he said that He sat at the right hand of the majesty on high. For Christ first redeemed us by the blood of His suffering, and so He entered the height of heaven, where now He sits at the right hand of the Father.[2]

He again lays stress on the finished offering in his exposition of the seventh chapter.

What did our Lord Jesus Christ do ? He offered a sacrifice not for His own shortcomings but for ours ; and

[1] *Epist.* lxxx. 2 ; Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 914.
[2] *Ad loc.*, Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii. 688.
Comp.—

Nos credimus Natum Dei,
Partumque Virginis sacrae ;
Peccata qui mundi tulit,
Ad dexteram sedens Patris.
Ambrosian Hymn. Neale, *Hymni Ecclesiae*, p. 102.

Hora quoque jam Tertia
Christus cruce suspensus est ;
Voluntatem Patris implevit ;
Mundi peccatum abstulit.
Conscendit sedem propriam
Sedet ad Dei dexteram ;
Collaudunt Throni Dominum,
Quem perfidi negaverant.
Moz. Brev. Neale, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

Pro universis immolatus Dominus
Ipse sacerdos existit et Hostia.
Antiph. Benchor.

once for all He did this, not frequently, because He once for all died for our sins, and He dies no more, death hath no more dominion over Him. He shows the excellence of Christ's sacrifice, in that though offered once it had an efficacy which all the sacrifices of the Law together did not possess. For it was one and once offered, and it is eternally sufficient to take away all the sins of those who believe.[1]

Similarly in his comments on ch. x. 12 he emphasizes the completed propitiation.

Those priests of the Jews, by offering daily many victims, were not able to take away sins: but Christ by offering Himself once for all took away the sins of the world. He is seated now in the glory of God the Father.

The Vulgate prevented his basing any argument upon the antithesis between the posture of standing and that of sitting, but he contrasts ministering and sitting.

To minister or offer is a sign of ministry, by which is understood the humility of Christ. But to sit is a sign of one who judges or rules so as to be ministered unto, by which is shown the exaltation and glory of Christ, who appeared in humility.[2]

Gregory the Great used language which by itself might be taken to signify continual propitiation. He speaks of Christ as *not ceasing to offer Himself*, and so as making *an entrance to life for our acceptance.*[3]

But the context shows that he is treating not of the propitiatory work proper, but of the application of that propitiation. Christ's continual presence, in His glorified humanity, with the Father is the means by which the

[1] Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii., p. 732.
[2] *Ad loc.*, Migne, lxviii. 750.
[3] *In* 1 *Reg. Exp., Lib.* i., *c.* 1; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxix. 45.

reconciliation through the blood is rendered available for us.[1]

Alcuin ignores the association of the Session with completed propitiation in Heb. i. 3, x. 12 ; but in his comments on ch. vii. 27 he says :—

> *He did not offer for Himself but for the people ; and this sacrifice for the people had not to be offered daily, but was of such holiness and honour before God, that when it had been once offered, it benefited the people of God for eternity.*[2]

Sedulius Scotus regarded Heb. x. 12 as a declaration of completed propitiation. The Vulgate stood in the way of his fully appreciating the antithesis between standing and sitting ; but he interpreted *sedet* as distinguishing Christ from a servant. Christ sits *as Lord, for to minister is the part of servants.*[3]

In his exposition of Heb. i. 3 Sedulius introduces the idea of the application of the propitiatory efficacy of Christ's death through Baptism.[4] Thus he writes :—

> *Purgavit peccata per sanguinem et gratiam baptismi.*

But the idea is foreign to the context.

Paschasius Radbertus was one of the early exponents of the mediaeval Eucharistic doctrine. He laboured under a strange misconception of Christ's heavenly ministry, as may be seen from the following words :—

> *Christ is shown by the evidence of Scripture always to stand by the heavenly altar ; that from His offering of*

[1] *Sic se offerre non desinit* is Gregory's equivalent for *Se in humanitate assumpta pro salute nostra aeterno Patri continue exhibere.*

[2] Migne, *P.L.*, C. 1067.

[3] *Collect. in Epist. ad Heb., ad loc. ;* Migne, *P.L.*, ciii. 265.

[4] So Haymo, see below, p. 123.

Himself (*immolatio*) *we may receive His Body and His Blood.*[1]

Now while allowing, as Paschasius does fully,[2] that *standing by the altar* is a figurative expression, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that its use marks a serious divergence from the language of the New Testament. The posture of standing is predicated of Jesus only in the record of Stephen's vision and (under the imagery of *the Lamb*) in the Apocalypse; and it is in the Apocalypse alone that there is any reference to an altar in heaven. But the language of vision and apocalypse cannot be regarded in the same light as that of dogmatic utterance. No posture but that of standing could have been predicated of *the Lamb*, and Stephen's vision had no connexion with the sacrificial work of the Lord. Moreover, we may not single out pictorial details of apocalypse and treat them as dogmatic statements any more than we may use the terms of a parable as the language of creed.[3] In

[1] *De Corp. et sang. Dom.*, xii. 3; Migne, *P.L.*, cxx. 1312. It seems as though Paschasius has read into Scripture the language of the Liturgies, which make frequent reference to the heavenly altar.

[2] He writes: *Do you imagine that the altar at which Christ stands as High Priest is anything else than His Body, through which and in which He offers to the Father the prayers of the faithful and the faith of the believers?*

Op. cit., viii. 2; *ibid.*, 1287 f.

[3] See above, pp. 23 f. A recently published translation of a Coptic hymn includes the following stanza:—

Jesus Christus, creator mundi,
Stat ante sedem [*Dei*]
Orans pro Christianis
Ut salvet [*eos*] *in temptationibus.*

This appears, at first sight, to be evidence from a non-Latin source for the conception of our Lord standing to officiate as Priest in Heaven, but a closer examination reveals the following points:—

the dogmatic statements of the New Testament the Lord Jesus is invariably said to be seated, and heaven is the sanctuary within the veil, which is only entered after propitiatory sacrifice is over.

The sacrificial language of the Fathers had been kept within the bounds of New Testament teaching by the insistence on the completeness of Christ's propitiatory work: but as soon as this safeguard was parted with, the earlier language was used to support doctrines which the Fathers themselves would have been the first to repudiate.

Haymo of Halberstadt follows Sedulius Scotus in his exposition of Heb. i. 3, and introduces the idea of the application of Christ's propitiatory work through Baptism. This involves the conception of a continual *purg-*

(1) The whole hymn is derived from the vision of Apoc. iv. v., where *the Lamb* is seen *standing in the midst of the Throne.*

(2) The editor has added a note pointing out that the word translated *orans* is in the plural. Hence the reference of the Coptic is to the prayers of the Elders.

(3) *Orantes* (i.e. *dum illi xxiv seniores orant*) would bring the conception into line with that of Stanza 1 which has,

per intercessiones Deiparae
et xxiv seniorum,

and that of Stanza 2 which has,

per preces et intercessiones
xxiv seniorum.

The Editor's emendation illustrates the tendency to read into the language of Apoc. v. 6 a conception which it does not contain. See Gaselee, *Parerga Coptica*, No. 1, p. 5.

Bishop Bickersteth makes a similar use of the language of St. Stephen's vision in his hymn *O Christ, Thou hast ascended:*

There, there Thou standest pleading
The virtue of Thy blood,
For sinners interceding,
Our Advocate with God.

ing, which, though true in itself, represents a different point of view from that of the language of that passage. But he makes it quite clear that in his opinion the actual propitiation was a thing of the past. He says, using the language of Primasius :—

> *He* (i.e. the writer of the Epistle) *first showed that the Lord had procured for us the purging of sins by His suffering, and then he said that He took His seat at the right hand of the majesty on high.*

He explains the Session as signifying *habitare et esse*.[1]

Lanfranc also seems to have been misled by the Vulgate into the idea that the cleansing referred to in Heb. i. 3 is a continual process of propitiation. He explains it in language which was frequently used of the Intercession, viz. *Patri exhibendo humanitatem quam assumpsit pro nobis*.[2]

Bruno of Chartreuse writes :—

> *His offering once made was sufficient for the remission of all things for all men. Wherefore there is no necessity for it to be repeated.*[3]

Again he says :—

> *But this High Priest, Christ, when He had offered* (*offerens*) *a sacrifice not repeated, but one alone for the sins of all, sits, that is rests and reigns, placed at the right hand, that is, in equality with God the Father, there to sit for eternity.*[4]

In this passage two points are specially worthy of

[1] See Migne, *P.L.*, cxvii. 824. Comp. Luculentus, *ad loc.*; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxii. 856.

[2] See Migne, *P.L.*, cl. 376.

[3] In *Epist. ad Heb.* vii. 25; Migne, *P.L.*, cliii. 527.

[4] In *Epist. ad Heb.* x. 12; *ibid.*, 545.

notice: (1) the use of the present participle to denote the one completed offering; (2) the explanation of the Session as signifying cessation from the work of offering.

Bruno describes the purpose of this section of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the following words:—

Per pontificium Christi sufficienter vetus pontificium destruxit, et vetera sacrificia reprobata, et in sacrificio Christi semel oblato omnem justificationem consistere perhibuit.

Radulphus Ardens, referring in one of his homilies to Mc. xvi. 19, says that the Session signifies rest, sovereignty and judgment. *Our Redeemer is well described as taking His seat after His Passion and Ascension, since after labour He rests, after conflict He reigns, after being judged He judges.*[1]

Hervey of Dole similarly interprets the Session as signifying rest as well as sovereignty and judgment,[2] and insists on the completion of Christ's propitiatory work.

Commenting on Heb. x. 12, he writes:—

This our true priest, the sufficiency of whose sacrifice we have laboured to show, when He had Himself offered (offerens), not often, not many sacrifices, but one which alone was sufficient for wiping out the sins of all believers, after fulfilling the obedience of His passion, sits, that is, rests and reigns and judges, at the right hand of God, . . . there to remain for ever, since He needs not again to labour and again to offer. And although we offer His sacrifice day by day, yet Christ does not any more feel

[1] See Migne, *P.L.*, clv. 1926.

[2] Comp. *In Epist. ad Heb.* i. 3, viii. 3; Migne, *P.L.*, clxxxi. 1523, 1593.

the grief of the suffering; but a commemoration of His suffering is made by us.[1]

He contrasts Christ's own completed offering with the offering which He makes through His priests on earth.

Although He Himself suffers no more yet because He does not cease to offer the same sacrifice through His priests, it is now well said that offering one sacrifice for sins He sits at the right hand of God; for "offering" belongs to present time, because (as we have said) it is through His priests that He Himself still offers His sacrifice, since through Himself He offered it once and for all; for concerning His passion it was said that His sacrifice was once and for all offered, though it is still offered in the ministrations. The Priest of the Law ministers, but He sits, because to minister belongs to servants, but to sit belongs to masters.[2]

This passage is particularly interesting for two reasons:

(*a*) As being a conspicuous instance of erroneous exegesis based on the Vulgate. Hervey argues that *offerens* implies continuous offering, but Christ Himself offered once for all, therefore He must be offering now through His priests.

(*b*) As showing that Hervey's conception of the Eucharistic Offering was not that of an earthly counterpart of a heavenly offering, but of a continuance by representation of a completed offering.

In the light of these passages we can the better appreciate the significance of Hervey's language when he says that Christ lives for perpetual intercession; that is to say, He lives not only on account of His own glory and the reward of His own obedience, but also for this, *to*

[1] *Op. cit.*, col. 1630. [2] *Ibid.*, col. 1631.

always offer Himself, that is, to show Himself to the Father for our glory and exaltation. For by that nature in which He is High Priest, that is, the human nature which He carried to heaven, He pleads and intercedes for us.[1]

(2) *From the Reformation Period to the Present Time.*

We might have expected to find that in Reformation theology much was made of the Session in its relation to the propitiatory work of Christ, but as a matter of fact the subject received at the hands of the Reformers surprisingly little treatment in that connexion. The reasons of this are probably two: (1) At the time of the Reformation men still depended very largely on the Vulgate for their knowledge of Holy Scripture. (2) The controversy over the character of Christ's propitiatory work turned almost entirely on the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which had become the key of the mediaeval position. The consequence of this was that in the sixteenth century interest in the doctrine of the Session was concentrated on its relation to the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. This was the field on which the campaign against the Mass was waged. The doctrine of the Session assumed a prominence which had not belonged to it before, but it did so as signifying primarily the absence of the actual Body and Blood of Christ, and only indirectly the cessation of His propitiatory work.

Thus, for example, Heb. x. 12 appeared to have more

[1] *Op. cit.*, col. 1590, quoted by Peter Lombard (Migne, *P.L.*, cxcii. 456), who draws largely on Walafrid. Strab. and Herv., and contributes but little himself. But the following words of his may be noted in this connexion; *Adeo enim magnum est sacrificium, quod licet unum et semel oblatum sit, tamen sufficit ad aeternitatem.* This is a clear assertion of the completeness both of the sacrifice of Christ and of the offering of it.

interest for Cranmer as indicating the withdrawal of Christ as Man from the earth, than as proving the completed propitiation.[1] And he, doubtless through familiarity with the Vulgate, made nothing at all of the antithesis between ἕστηκεν and ἐκάθισεν.[2]

Hooper explains the Session as signifying the equality of Christ with the Father, His Headship of the Church, the absence from earth of His human nature; but it is only incidentally that he alludes to its bearing upon the propitiatory work, as in the words *declaring unto us what Christ hath done for us, that now sitteth at the right hand of God the Father.*[3]

Calvin explained the Session as signifying one thing only, viz. government. It is *a similitude taken from princes who are wont to place those on their right hand whom they make their vicegerents.*[4]

It means that *the Father bestowed upon Christ the dominion of heaven and earth so that He governs all things* (*Matt. xxviii.* 18). The exaltation of Christ to *the right hand* was *the inauguration in the government of heaven and earth, and the solemn entrance on the actual administration of the power committed to Him.*[5] *The only design of the Apostles in their frequent mention of the Session is to teach us that all things are committed to His government.*

Even in his comments on Heb. i. 3, x. 12 Calvin adheres to the same limited conception. The antithesis in the

[1] *Answer to Gardiner*, Bk iii.; *On the Lord's Supper*, p. 93 P.S.

[2] Cf. e.g. *op. cit.*, p. 345. Comp. Ridley, *Disput. at Oxf.*, *Works*, p. 210 P.S.

[3] *Early Writings*, p. 126 P.S.

[4] *Catech. of Geneva*, *Tracts*, vol. ii, p. 49, Engl. Transl., Beveridge.

[5] *Instit. of the Christian Religion*, ii. 15; vol. i. p. 416, Ed. Allen, 1844.

latter passage, which throws the emphasis upon the idea of rest, was hidden from him through the Vulgate, and he assigns to the Session the very opposite significance of activity.

> *Lest men should imagine that Christ is now idle in heaven, he repeats again that He sat down at God's right hand, by which phrase is denoted His dominion and power.*[1]

But Calvin was most insistent on the completeness of Christ's propitiatory work, even though He did not associate the idea with the Session.

The sacrifice of Christ was so sufficient that *nothing more remains for us but to enjoy it.*[2] By it *the remembrance of our sins was effaced so as never to come into the view of God.*[3]

And it is in the light of this teaching that certain ambiguities in Calvin's writings must be explained. He defines, for example, the Priesthood of Christ as *the office and prerogative of appearing in the presence of God to obtain grace, and of appeasing His wrath by the offering of a sacrifice which is acceptable to Him.*[4] He speaks, moreover, of *the one perpetual sacrifice*;[5] but in the same context he denies that the Supper was instituted in order to offer up to God the body of His Son. By *perpetual* he means perpetually efficacious.

He also writes, *As Christ was once offered on the Cross to reconcile us to God, He is also daily offered in the Supper*, but the context makes it clear that he is referring to Christ's offering of Himself in the Supper to man.[6]

[1] *Ep. to Hebrews*, Ed. Owen, p. 231.
[2] *Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 90. Engl. Transl., Beveridge.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 48. Comp. pp. 156, 182.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 207. Comp.: *As He was once offered in sacrifice, He gives Himself to us in order that we may enjoy Him*, p. 208;

Becon used Heb. x. 12 to illustrate the completeness of Christ's offering; and, although he could only perceive the antithesis of the passage in the weakened form in which it is presented in the Vulgate, he evidently regarded the Session as signifying the cessation of propitiatory work.[1] But this did not prevent Him from speaking of Christ's sacrifice as everlasting.

His words are:—

> *Christ is an everlasting priest; and as His priesthood is everlasting, so likewise is His sacrifice everlasting. I mean, it endureth for ever in full virtue and perfect strength to put away at all times all the sins of all people that do unfeignedly repent and believe; so that it needeth not for any imbecility, weakness or imperfection to be repeated or offered again, as the Papists presume.*[2]

Jewel dwells with considerable emphasis upon the distinction between the perpetuity of Christ's sacrifice, and that of its efficacy.

He writes:—

> *The old Fathers call that the daily sacrifice that Christ made once for all upon the Cross, for that, as Christ is a priest for ever, so doth the same His sacrifice last for ever; not that it is daily and really renewed by any mortal creature, but that the power and virtue thereof is infinite in itself and shall never be consumed.*[3]

But it is interesting to notice how entirely he ignores the bearing of the Session upon the point. Indeed he

Christ ceases not to offer Himself to be enjoyed by His faithful followers, though He descend not to the earth, p. 275.

[1] *Catechism,* p. 248 P.S.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 247.

[3] *Controv. with Harding, Of Private Mass; Works,* vol. i. p. 128 P.S.

allows himself strangely to depart in that respect from Scriptural language, as, for example, when he says :—

> *Certainly our sacrifice is the very body of Christ, and that for ever, according to the Order of Melchizedek, evermore standing in God's presence, and evermore obtaining pardon for us ; not offered up by us, but offering us up unto God the Father.*[1]

Hooker interprets the Session as signifying Christ's sovereignty both as man and as God, His glory as man, and His ministry ; but he has nothing to say about its significance in relation to the offering.[2]

Peter Martyr Vermigli carefully distinguishes the intercession of Christ from His offering, and thereby indirectly assigns to the Session the significance of completed offering. He says :—

> *Christ is our bishop and priest : but the office of a bishop is both to offer sacrifice, and also to pray for the people. Christ hath offered Himself upon the Cross, and when He had performed that ministry, there remained another ministry which He should perpetually exercise, namely to make intercession for us . . . Christ maketh intercession unto the Father because He is always at hand with Him. Therefore the Father is perpetually put in mind of the sacrifice once offered by Him.*[3]

Beza played an important part in liberating Western exegesis from the cramping influence of the Vulgate. An example of this can be seen in his treatment of Heb. i.

[1] *Controv. with Harding, Of Real Presence ; Works,* vol. i. p. 491 P.S.

[2] *Eccl. Pol.,* V. lv. 8 ; *Works,* vol. i. p. 619. Ex. Oxford.

[3] *Commonplaces,* Pt. iii. 13, 15 ; Pt. iii. pp. 307 f., Ed. Mart., A.D. 1583.

3. In that passage he substituted the Old Latin rendering *purificatione peccatorum nostrorum per seipsum facta* for Jerome's inaccurate translation [1]; and his exposition of the passage brings out clearly the bearing of the Session upon the completed offering.

Commenting on ἐκάθισεν, he writes :—

> *This indicates that the savour of that sacrifice was not only most pleasing to the Father, but also perpetually efficacious* (*perennem*).

It is with this significance of perpetual efficacy that he uses the phrase *perenne sacrificium*.[2]

In Heb. viii. 3 Beza substituted *necesse fuit* for the *necesse est* of the Vulgate. While admitting that there was an absence of agreement as to the word to be supplied after *necesse*, he gives as his reason for refusing *est* the fact that the writer of the Epistle *has previously said that the offering of Christ has been already completed, although it is certain that its efficacy is perpetual*.[3] The passage gives *a true and universal definition of a High Priest, from which Christ neither could nor ought to have been exempted, and which He has so completely satisfied as to have offered a far more excellent sacrifice, and to have performed for eternity a far more perfect kind of offering*.

In Heb. x. 12 the colourless *praesto est* of the Vulgate has to give way to *ad-stat*.

[1] *Purgationem peccatorum faciens.*

[2] Comp. his comment on ch. vii. 25 : *He does not say "to offer," for this He did once for all. But there remains the other part of the priestly work, viz. intercession, by which He obtains peace for us by the efficacy of His perpetual sacrifice* (*perennis sacrificii*), *and we, only in Him alone, please the Father and are heard by Him.*

[3] Beza also refuses *necesse esset* (i.e. the necessity would exist if Christ were an earthly High Priest), because it involves an awkward ellipse, and does not fit in with the writer's argument.

Christ was once indeed a minister (λειτοῦργος) *but now He is High Priest in such wise that at the same time He sits as Eternal King.*

Pearson includes the idea of *rest* in his explanation of Christ's Session, but he defines the *rest* as freedom from pain and sorrow. He makes no specific mention of the idea of cessation of propitiatory offering.[1]

In a reference, however, to Heb. x. 12 he says :—

Though the sacrifice be but once offered, yet the virtue of it is perpetually advanced by His Session.[2]

Isaac Barrow's writings contain two expositions of the doctrine of the Session, but in neither of them does he directly allude to its significance as the evidence of completed propitiation. It denotes rest, but it is *the undisturbed rest and quiet of that glorious condition wherein He is instated.*[3] It is at the same time a state of activity, for Christ is seated as King, Priest, Prophet, Forerunner, and Head of the Church. As Priest, He applies the virtue of His sacrifice and pleads our cause with God.

He has offered a well-pleasing sacrifice for our sins, and doth at God's right hand continually renew it, by presenting it unto God and interceding with Him for the effect thereof.[4]

It is the continual renewal of a *once offered pure and perfect sacrifice.* Barrow makes no attempt to reconcile the language with such a passage as Heb. x. 12.

Grotius was evidently led into confusion of thought by the Vulgate rendering of Heb. x. 12. The present par-

[1] *Exp. of the Creed,* pp. 526, 528, Ed. Sinker.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 538.
[3] *Works,* vol. ii. p. 363, Ed. Hamilton, 1861.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 367.

ticiple *offerens* seems to have suggested to him the thought of an offering in heaven. His comment is *nempe in caelo ut summus sacerdos in sanctuario.*[1] On the other hand, his exposition of ἐκάθισεν implies that the earth was the scene of the completed offering. His words are :—

> *Because that one offering is sufficient, therefore He will not return to offer it ; He will remain there until He returns, not to offer again but to judge and to triumph.*

John Owen, whose work still holds a foremost place among expositions of the Epistle to the Hebrews, points out in his comment on ch. i. 3, that the Session was not a part of the process of purging, but was a consequence of the completed work. The entrance into the condition of glory was the signal pledge and evidence that the work of propitiation had been perfected.[2] The remaining duties of mediation consisted in the application of the benefits of the oblation unto believers and that by intercession.[3]

Owen points out that the misleading character of Jerome's rendering of the passage has been recognized even by Mediaeval expositors, such as Thomas, Lyranus, Cajetan, Estius, Ribera, A Lapide.[4]

While allowing that the perpetual efficacy and the representation of it in intercession may be said to be an offering by Christ of Himself, he insists on the fact that the sacrifice and oblation were properly on earth.[5]

G. C. Knapp regarded the idea of rest as one of the most important connotations of the Session. He shows that in Heb. i. 3, x. 12 the Session is set over, in sharp

[1] *Annot. in New Test.*, Tom. ii. p. 1047, Ed. Amst., 1679.
[2] *On the Hebrews*, vol. iii. p. 128, Ed. 1813.
[3] Vol. vi. p. 24.
[4] Vol. iii. p. 120.
[5] Vol. vi. pp. 41 f.

contrast, against ministration. Criticizing an interpretation of the latter passage, which referred it to Christ sitting as God over the Ark in the Temple, he writes:—

The whole of this comparison (i.e. in ch. x. 12) *has in view only the standing and the sitting, not the place where they stood and He sat.*[1]

Bengel's comments are most emphatic in their insistence on the Session as the proof of completed propitiation.

Sacerdotes ministrantes stabant. Sessio igitur notat consummationem sacrificii, et regnum gloriosum.[2]

Oblatio una quidem erat, sed ἔντευξις, interpellatio pro salvandis nobis, in caelis perpetua est.[3]

"Consedit." Peracta oblatione.[4] *Oblatio Christi, semel peracta, in aeternum una et sola manebit; non alia superveniet. "Consedit." Antitheton, ἕστηκεν.*[5]

He points out the bearing of the doctrine upon the alleged sacrifice of the Mass.

Cum Sessione ad dextram Dei non consistit missaticum sacrificium. Nam Christi sacrificium, in Missa neque continuatur, neque reiteratur. Apostolus non modo identitatem, sed τὸ ἅπαξ, semel, urget de sacrificio Christi, in antitheto ad sacrificia Levitica saepe oblata, quamvis eadem essent. Sacrificium, quod saepe iteratur, quamvis idem sit, non satisfacit Deo. Christi non solum est corpus unum, sed una etiam oblatio, eaque inseparabilis a passione. Posterior quaeque oblatio declarat, priorem esse nullam: prior quaeque declarat, posteriorem esse supervacuam.[6]

[1] *Script. Var. Arg.*, Tom. i. p. 46.
[2] On Heb. i. 3; *Gnomon, Nov. Test.*, Tom. ii. p. 395, Ed. Tub., 1850. [3] On Heb. vii. 25; *ibid.*, p. 432.
[4] On Heb. viii. 1; *ibid.*, p. 434.
[5] On Heb. x. 12; *ibid.*, p. 446. [6] *Ibid.*

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth comments on the two antitheses contained in Heb. x. 12. The first, of ἕστηκεν and ἐκάθισεν, he explains as denoting the superiority of Christ, *His dignity and continuance, sovereignty and judicature.* It is strange that in this summarizing of the conceptions to be associated with the Session he passes over the significance of completed propitiation; and the more so, because he dwells on it so emphatically in his exposition of the passage, where he says:—

> *A past act cannot be perpetual. But Christ has offered a sacrifice in perpetuity. He says that Christ has done this, and that, after He had done it, He took His seat at the right hand of God.*[1]

The reason of the omission probably is that the second antithesis, of *the same sacrifices offered often by the Levitical Priests, and the one sacrifice offered once for all by Christ,* declares so emphatically the completeness of Christ's propitiatory work, that the special significance of ἐκάθισεν was looked for in other directions.

Wordsworth notes the bearing of the passage on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as ruling out *both repetition and continuance of the sacrifice*; and he adds a comment on the Patristic use of sacrificial language. The Fathers, he says, might well call a resemblance of the sacrifice by the name of sacrifice, but they could not have called an actual sacrifice by the name of a resemblance. Moreover, they could not foresee the results of their free use of sacrificial language.

> *They would therefore not be so scrupulous in speaking on this subject, as they would be, if they lived now. This is to be borne in mind in reading their works.*[2]

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[1] *The New Testament in Greek, ad loc.*

[2] See also Wordsworth's Comments on *Mal.* i. 11.

Alford criticizes Jerome's translation of Heb. i. 3, and regards *faciens* as a mistake. *The purification is completed before the action next described takes place; this all seem to acknowledge here.* The latter statement is hardly accurate. The present participle was interpreted by several Latin expositors as denoting the continual application of the purification.[1]

He does not associate ἐκάθισεν in Heb. i. 3, x. 12 with the idea of completed propitiation. He regards it as signifying Christ's state of exaltation and waiting until the purposes of His mediatorial office are accomplished, and (in the latter passage) His pre-eminence over the Jewish High Priests. But at the same time Alford quotes with approval Chrysostom's explanation of the antithesis, viz. that standing is the sign of ministry, and session is the sign of completed ministry.[2]

Bishop Lightfoot, commenting on the absence of sacerdotal terms for the Christian ministry in the Apostolic writings, says :—

> *The interpretation of this fact is not far to seek. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks at great length on priests and sacrifices in their Jewish and Christian bearing. It is plain from this Epistle . . . that the one prominent idea of the priestly office at this time was the function of* offering sacrifice *and thereby making atonement. Now this Apostolic writer teaches that all sacrifices had been consummated in the one Sacrifice, all priesthoods absorbed in the one Priest. The offering had been made once for all; and, as there were no more victims, there could be no more priests. All former priesthoods had borne witness to the necessity of a human mediator, and this sentiment*

[1] See above, pp. 107 (footnote), 121, 123 f.
[2] See his comments on Heb. viii. 3.

had its satisfaction in the Person and office of the Son of man. All past sacrifices had proclaimed the need of an atoning death, and had their antitype, their realization, their annulment, in the Cross of Christ. This explicit statement supplements and interprets the silence elsewhere noticed in the Apostolic writings.[1]

The Bishop does not make specific reference to the significance of the Session in this connexion, but he quotes Heb. x. 11 f. to support his argument. His identification of the offering of Christ with the Death on Calvary should be noticed in view of the conception, which Canon Moberly and other writers [2] have put forward, of the perpetual offering through the perpetual self-presentation of Christ in heaven. This is the real issue which underlies the question as to the distinctive function of the minister in relation to the Lord's Supper. The divergence between the positions championed respectively by Bishop Lightfoot and Canon Moberly lies deeper than any mere difference of opinion about the functions of the Christian minister. It is primarily a difference of conception as to the nature of Christ's propitiatory offering.[3] In Bishop Lightfoot's dissertation the identification of the offering with the Death on Calvary is assumed throughout: in Canon Moberly's work Calvary is represented as a necessary incident in the process of offering, but the offering itself is identified with the unending Life of the Offerer.[4] Thus he writes:—

[1] *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry: The Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 264 f., Ed. 1891.

[2] See below, pp. 143 f.

[3] See Sanday, *The Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 79 ff.

[4] For an earlier treatment of the two conceptions, see Deyling, *Jesu Christi* ΕΜΦΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ *in Conspectu Dei, Observat.*, Part iv. pp. 559, Ed. 1757.

Though Calvary be the indispensable preliminary, yet it is not Calvary taken apart, not Calvary quite so directly as the eternal self-presentation in Heaven of the risen and ascended Lord, which is the true consummation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But of course in that eternal presentation Calvary is eternally implied.[1]

Bishop Westcott explains the Session of Christ as expressing *under a natural image the three ideas of an accomplished work, of a divine sovereignty, and, by consequence, of an efficacious intercession.*

This order is significant: the conception of the accomplished work is fundamental.

The image of Christ's Session is that of perfect rest. . . The sacrifice has been completed, but the fruit of it remains inexhaustible. The purification of sins has been made, but the application of it is for all time.[2]

In his Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Westcott criticizes Jerome's rendering of ch. i. 3 as failing to give the sense; and explains ἐκάθισεν as denoting completed atonement, in contrast with the eternal Being of Christ and His work through all time in support of created things, and the assumption of the Royal throne.[3]

Commenting on ch. viii. 1 ff. the Bishop writes:—

The present work of Christ is the application of the virtue of His one sacrifice of Himself.[4]

His intercession knows no end or interruption; and therefore no second offering is required.[5]

[1] *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 246. Comp. Prof. Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, pp. 49 f.

[2] *The Historic Faith*, p. 82.

[3] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 15, Ed. 1892.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 211 f. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

He thinks that ἦν should be supplied after ἀναγκαῖον as both the type and the context seem to require that the reference should be to the offering on the Cross.[1]

He refers to ἐκάθισεν (ch. x. 12) as being *in sharp opposition to* ἕστηκε λειτουργῶν, which gives the idea *of a work still to be done, of service still to be rendered, of homage still to be paid.*[2]

Dimock gives, in his work *Our one High Priest on high*, an exhaustive historical treatment of the two passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chs. viii. 3, ix. 7) upon which the conception of continued propitiation has been based. He admits that the former passage, if studied as an isolated statement, might be interpreted in this way, but he maintains that it *more than fails to necessitate our acceptance of any such doctrine.*[3] He regards the idea itself as ruled out by the canon of exegesis according to which the *interpretation of particular texts* (*where doubtful*) *must in reason be governed by the general tenor of the teaching as a whole.*[4]

Of the latter passage he says: *The true interpretation of the text gives evidence against, rather than for, any real offering of sacrifice for sins in the heavens.*[5]

He maintains that the general teaching of Scripture, and especially of the Epistle, offers no foundation for the assumption that the perpetual Priesthood of Christ implies of necessity the perpetual offering of His sacrifice. And yet it was on this assumption that the conception of a propitiatory sacrifice in the Eucharist was based.

[1] Bp. Westcott also emphasizes the significance of the aorist προσενέγκῃ, following Beza, who rendered it by *quod offeret* (see above, pp. 49, 132). Comp. Archdeacon Perowne, *Our High Priest in Heaven*, p. 61.

[2] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 313 f. [3] P. 13, Ed. 1910.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 3. See also Archdeacon Perowne, *Our High Priest in Heaven*, p. 61. [5] *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

That conception has witnessed a development. The older form of the argument was that Christ cannot possibly be offering in heaven, and therefore His perpetual Priesthood has its sphere of operation out of heaven, i.e. on earth, and in the Mass.

The more modern idea is that Christ must be perpetually offering in heaven, and therefore the Scriptural testimonies to the completeness of His sacrifice must be understood in a qualified sense. The barrier to perpetual offering on earth is consequently removed. This (in the Eucharist) has the same sort of relation to the once-offered sacrifice on the Cross, as the offering of Christ in heaven has to it.[1]

Bishop Gore speaks of *the everliving sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary*, but insists on the necessity of the Reformation assertion that this sacrifice was one, needing no supplementing, and admitting of no renewal. He points out that this truth was imperilled in Roman theology, at first by the conception of *the sacrifice of the altar* as an addition to the sacrifice of Christ, and later by the conception of a re-sacrificing of Christ. He says that the Patristic references to *immolation* in the Eucharist belonged to the symbolism and not to the reality of the sacrament.[2]

With this explanation, the use of phrases such as *the everlasting sacrifice* may be regarded as a mere matter of language. But even so the question arises as to whether the history of such language, and the obvious necessity in our own day of safeguarding it against abuse,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

[2] *The Body of Christ*, pp. 174 ff. Bp. Gore identifies our Lord's propitiation and His intercession, and therefore, while maintaining the completed sacrifice, he insists on perpetual propitiation. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 251 ff. For an earlier criticism of this view see Deyling, *Observat.* Pars iv., pp. 573 f.

do not suggest the advisability of expressing the truth in some different form. And it is worthy of note that in writings where this language is used there is very little, if any, reference to the significance of the Session in its relation to the propitiatory work of Christ.

A conspicuous instance of this phenomenon is to be found in Dr. Darwell Stone's *History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, where the writer emphasizes the idea of the abiding character of Christ's sacrifice in terms which certainly suggest that in some sense the sacrifice is now going on. It is *in union with Christ and His heavenly sacrifice* that *Christian worship and life are spoken of in the Epistle* (*i.e. Hebrews*) *as possessing a sacrificial element.*[1] It is in the Eucharist that *there is access to the abiding sacrifice of Christ in heaven.*[2]

The language is not qualified by any indication of the emphasis which the Epistle lays on the completeness of the sacrifice once offered, nor is there any reference to the fact of the Session. The idea presented is that of *one sacrifice for ever*, in the sense not of perpetual efficacy but of continual offering.

The conception which finds expression in the writings of Bishop Moule is undoubtedly different. The difference is such that it cannot be regarded as a mere variety of phraseology: it represents divergence both in emphasis and interpretation. The emphasis of the Epistle to the Hebrews is stated to be on the fact that *not only the sacrifice, but also the offering or presentation of it is over for ever; while the royal, High-priestly intercession and benediction based upon it are present and continuous;*[3] and the fact of the Session occupies a central place in

[1] Vol. i. p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[3] *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 104.

the interpretation. Christ is a *Priest for ever*, not as offering for ever, but as ever carrying out, on the ground of His finished offering, His regal, sacerdotal intercession and benediction. The interpretation of Hebrews viii. 3 is not that Christ must be continually engaged in the work of offering.

> *The thought appears to be decisively negatived by the grandeur of the terms of the first verse of this chapter. Where, in the heavenly sanctuary, is our High Priest now? He has "taken His seat on the right hand of the throne of the majesty." But enthronement is a thought out of line with the act and attitude of oblation.*

Hence the language of the third verse is

> *to be explained not of a continuous historical procedure (to which idea, by the way, the aorist verb προσενέγκῃ would hardly be appropriate), but as the statement of a principle in terms of time. The "necessity" is, not that He should have something to offer now, and to-morrow, and always, but that the matter and act of offering should belong to Him. . . . His need is not to be always offering, but to be always an offerer.*[1]
>
> *A priest is a priest (as to the altar part of his function) not as always offering but as always being an offerer. Our Lord is for ever characterized as an offerer by His unique and ever-efficacious sacrifice once offered.*[2]

Dr. William Milligan seeks to reconcile the two ideas of the completed sacrifice and the continual heavenly offering. He refuses Bishop Westcott's interpretation of Christ's entrance into the Holy of Holies in virtue of His completed offering, nor does he allow that the aorist

[1] *Messages from the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 35.
[2] *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 104, footnote.

προσενέγκῃ in Heb. viii. 3 determines the completed character of the action.

He maintains that the fundamental conception of our Lord's offering is not death but life. The same life which was given to God through the death on Calvary is next presented to the Father within the sanctuary. *What He offered on the Cross, what He offers now, is His Life.*[1]

This position must be criticized in the light of Heb. vii. 27, ix. 25 f., where the offering is stated to have been a historical and completed act in the past, and limited to the experience on Calvary.

But starting from the very different conception of the offering as consisting in life, and not death, Dr. Milligan easily achieves his task of reconciliation.

> *The repetition is impossible not simply because of the excellency of the offering when first made, but because it never ceases, or can cease, to be before God in the very same light as that in which upon the Cross it was acceptable to Him. An act may be repeated, and, if not in a real, it may (as in the Roman Catholic Church) be repeated in an unreal form: a state, a condition which knows no end, cannot be repeated. . . . . In the presence of the Father, He is for ever the Lamb that was slain, and no repetition of His offering can take place.*[2]

And here the same phenomenon comes to light as was noticed before. Dr. Milligan has no doctrine of the

[1] Canon Moberly adopts the same view. *Christ's offering in heaven is a perpetual ever-present offering of life, whereof "to have died" is an ever-present and perpetual attribute* (*Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 246). In reading such a statement as this, we seem to be conscious of a distinct departure from the language of the New Testament. It summons us to a different focus of thought.

[2] *The Ascension of our Lord*, pp. 121 ff.

Session. He fails even to notice the normal usage of the New Testament. He writes :—

> *It is worthy of notice that the ordinary Scriptural representation of the position of the glorified Redeemer is either standing or some other attitude which invites to the thought of His being engaged in work.*[1]

It is not surprising that Dr. Milligan identifies the Offering with the Intercession, and that his conception of the Offering involves this further divergence from the language of the New Testament.

He says :—

> *The intercession and the offering cannot be separated from each other. The offering is itself a continuous intercession, the continuous intercession implies the offering as a present thing.*[2]

But it is just this separation that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews insists on. He identifies the Offering not with the Intercession but with the Death, and because the Death is accomplished and over he speaks of the Offering as a completed thing in the past.[3]

Dr. Milligan believes that the offering of the Church on earth is the counterpart of our Lord's offering of Himself in heaven ; but he explains it not as the offering of Him by the Church, but as the Church's offering of herself in union with Him.[4]

Professor Swete considers that the association of the idea of repose with the Session is precarious, and speaks of it as a thought not indicated in Holy Scripture.[5] But this does not mean that he regards the Offering as con-

[1] *The Ascension of our Lord*, pp. 57 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[3] Comp. Heb. vii. 25, 27. See Deyling, *Observat.*, Part iv. pp. 567, 573, Ed. 1757.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 267. [5] *The Ascended Christ*, pp. 13 f.

tinuous : on the contrary, he says, *the sacrifice is one, and once offered.*[1]

Dr. Swete continues :—

But if this sacrificial offering is not repeated, the sacrifice remains, for it is identical with the Priest, and the Priest lives and ministers age after age in the heavenly sanctuary.

Again :—

Heaven is not a place for sacrifice, and our Lord is no longer a sacrificing Priest : He has offered one sacrifice for sins for ever. But His Presence in the Holiest is a perpetual and effective presentation before God of the sacrifice once offered which is no less needful for our acceptance than the actual death upon the Cross. He has indeed somewhat to offer in His heavenly priesthood, for He offers Himself as representing to God man reconciled, and as claiming for man the right of access to the Divine Presence. He Himself, as He sits on the Throne, in the perfected and glorified Manhood which has been obedient unto death, is the living Propitiation for our sins, and the standing guarantee of acceptance to all that draw near unto God through Him.[2]

The continuance of the Offering as here (and elsewhere)[3] set forth by Dr. Swete appears to be something more than a perpetuity of efficacy. The language used suggests a continuance of the process of propitiation, which is at the same time compatible with the conception of completed offering, because of the identification of the Offering with the ever-living Offerer.

But here the question must be raised as to whether this identification of the Offering and the Priest really affects the question as to the manner and time of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 39. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 43. [3] Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Offering. In the opinion of the writer, it does not. For not only is there no inherent necessity for it to do so, but also there is the fact that in the New Testament the never-ending life of the Offerer is set over against the completeness of the Offering.[1] It is in the Death, and not in the Ascended Life, that the identification of the Offering and the Offerer is to be found.

St. John's statement that Jesus Christ *is the propitiation for our sins* need not mean a continuous process of propitiation, any more than the statement that Jesus Christ is the Word of God and the Light of the World means that the historical manifestation on earth is still continuing. And the New Testament statements which identify the Offering with the Death of Jesus are so unambiguous and emphatic that they must be permitted to determine the meaning of other passages whose interpretation may not be so clear.[2]

If then the sacrifice of Christ must be identified with the Death on Calvary, we can think of it as remaining, only in the sense in which any historical event may remain, viz. in influence and efficacy. The sacrifice remains in the same sense in which Christ is *the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world*. In other words the perpetuity of the sacrifice applies equally to the time which preceded the historical act, and to the time which follows it. It is the perpetuity of efficacy and not that of process.

We must here refer again to Dr. Swete's statement that *it seems precarious to connect the idea of repose with our Lord's Session in heaven*, and that such an idea is not to be included amongst the thoughts to which the Psalmist and his Apostolic interpreters point.[3]

[1] Comp. Heb. vii. 24, 27. [2] As e.g. Heb. viii. 3.
[3] *The Ascended Christ*, pp. 13 f.

If *the idea of repose* includes the idea of cessation from propitiatory offering, the statement is challenged by the history of the exegesis of Heb. i. 3, x. 12. Apart from the prolonged period of the influence of the Vulgate in the West, there has been a remarkable unanimity of assertion, both in the East and the West, to the effect that cessation of Propitiatory work is one of the leading ideas in those passages. This testimony finds no better expression than in the words of Bishop Westcott :—

> *The modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven His Passion, "Offering His Blood," on behalf of men, has no foundation in the Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work. He pleads, as older writers truly expressed the thought, by His Presence on the Father's Throne.*[1]

[1] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 230.

CHAPTER IV

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

B. Intercession

Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Guardian of mankind appears.

He, Who for men their Surety stood,
And pour'd on earth His precious blood,
Pursues in Heav'n His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.

M. Bruce.

DURING the first three centuries, in so far as Christian thought had embraced the conception of Christ's Intercession, men were content to dwell on the simple fact, without questioning the manner of its accomplishment. But when Arius included the fact of the Intercession among his arguments for the alleged inferiority of Christ to the Father, the necessity of explanation was forced upon the upholders of the orthodox belief; and the consequence was that the fourth century witnessed the rise of the doctrinal treatment of the subject.

That a divergence should have immediately manifested itself between Eastern and Western thought is only what we expect to find, when we remember the close connexion that exists between the Intercession and the Offering, and the difference of attitude which was exhibited in respect of the latter. On the whole, it is true

to say that Eastern thought concentrated its attention on the perpetual presence of Christ with the Father, and tended to regard the statements of the Intercession as symbolical declarations of the love of Christ; whereas Western thought developed for a time the conception of a perpetual offering of the finished sacrifice, and identified the Intercession with the Offering.

From the ninth century, however, and onwards, there is considerable evidence of a modification of Western thought in the direction of the Eastern conception, and in the sixteenth century the idea of completed propitiation became one of the leading points in the Reformed theology.

The further question as to whether the Intercession was properly to be regarded as *vocalis et realis* was raised in the West in the sixth century by Gregory the Great. At the Reformation it became a point of divergence on the Continent between the Lutheran and the *Reformed* leaders, the former regarding the Intercession as consisting literally in the offering of petitions, the latter interpreting it as being real but not oral, and as consisting in the Presence of Christ and not in articulate supplication.

In England the Reformers allied themselves with the Lutheran interpretation, and in so far as attention was given to the subject that view prevailed until recent years; but a change has taken place, and the tendency now is to adopt the conception of the Intercession as the Life and Presence of Christ in man's nature *at the right hand* of the Father. The idea has not infrequently been expressed in sacrificial terms. Through identification of the Offerer and the Offering, the latter is spoken of as eternal, and the sacrifice of Christ is regarded as perpetual, not merely in respect of its efficacy, but also

because it is continually presented or offered by virtue of the glorified Life of Jesus. Leading exponents of this view have been Dr. William Milligan, Dr. R. C. Moberly, and Professor Swete.

Others have focussed their thoughts (about the Offering of Christ) upon the Cross, distinguishing between the Offering and the Intercession which is based upon it. They have regarded the glorified Life of Jesus as *the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work*. Propitiatory sacrifice and offering are alike over: the Intercession, consisting in the Presence of Christ on the Throne, is continual.

This line of thought is represented in the writings of Bishop Lightfoot, Bishop Westcott, Mr. Dimock and Bishop Moule.

(*a*) Eastern Writers

Origen does not appear to have associated the Intercession of Christ with the Session. In a quotation of Rom. viii. 34 he substitutes the words *who stands at the right hand of the Father* [1] for *who is at the right hand of God*, which is an indication that the normal usage of the New Testament had failed to impress him.

The idea that intercession is a proof of inferiority had a conspicuous place in the Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. The argument was used to oppose the coequal Deity both of Christ and of the Holy Spirit.

Basil the Great met the argument in its relation to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit by showing that it would

[1] In *Epist. ad Rom.* Lib. vii. *c.* 10; *Opera*, Tom. iv. 607, Ed. De la rue, Par. Another instance of misquotation is, *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus the righteous, who intercedes for us*, where Origen appears to confound Rom. viii. 34 and 1 Jo. ii. 2.; *ibid.*, p. 601.

apply, if it were sound, with even greater force to the Son, *because He is at the right hand and intercedes for us.*[1]

Gregory of Nazianzus repudiates the idea that Christ's Intercession is the supplication of humility. He explains it as the mediating work of an ambassador, and illustrates it by a reference to the Intercession of the Spirit. The nature of Christ's Intercession is not *a casting of Himself down at the Father's feet, or a falling down in slavish manner;* it consists essentially in His presence with the Father in the body with which He suffered.[2]

Chrysostom emphasizes the fact that it is as seated at the right hand of the Father that Christ intercedes; and he draws from it the conclusion that the Intercession is a proof not of inferiority but of love.

He speaks of it as a manner of speech belonging to man, which has no other purpose than that of showing the warmth and strength of Christ's love for us; and he illustrates the point by a reference to 2 Cor. v. 20, where the Father is represented by St. Paul as beseeching men to be reconciled to Him. Chrysostom's comment is as follows:—

> *He that of His own power set free even from condemnation those who were past hope and condemned, and made them righteous and sons, and led them to the very highest honours, and brought to pass things which had never been hoped for, how should He, after having achieved all this, and shown our nature on the King's throne, need to be a supplicant to do the easier things?*[3]

Cyril of Alexandria regards the Intercession as effected by the Presence of Christ on the Throne. He writes:—

[1] *De Sp. Sanct., c.* xix.; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxii. 160.

[2] *Oratio,* xxx.; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxvi. 121.

[3] *In Epist. ad Rom. Hom.* xv.; *Opera,* Tom. ix. 660, Ed. Montfaucon. Par., 1837.

The Word of God appears now in a new manner . . . in human form and nature. In this way He appears for us and presents human nature before God the Father. The Word, by becoming Incarnate, presents us as it were in Himself to the Paternal eyes, that He may commend us to the Father, forgiven.[1]

Theodoret tries to remove the sting out of the Arian interpretation of the Intercession by asserting that Christ intercedes not as God but as man.

He says :—

What greater thing than these dost thou seek? Our Lord died for us, and having been raised from the dead sits with the Father; and not even so has He ceased to care for us; but showing the first-fruits which He received from us, and exhibiting the blamelessness of this to the Father, He makes petition by means of it for our salvation. This however He does according to His manhood, for as God He does not make request, but gives assistance. But even if heretics say that the Son does this according to His Deity, they could not even then show that His glory is less. For the will of each is the same: what pleases the Son, also pleases the Father. The word therefore has been fashioned by the Apostle as wishing to show the exceeding greatness of His care (for us).[2]

Theodoret has here yielded too much before the Arian attack, because he has no idea of intercession save that of offering petition. To part with the conception of Christ interceding for us as God, is to lose the assurance which St. Paul evidently intended to convey by his words.[3]

[1] *De recta Fide*, 46; *Opera*, Tom. v. Pt. ii. 167, Ed. Aubert. Lut., 1638. *Comp. Thes. Assert.* xx., Tom. v. Pt. i. 195.

[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxii. 144.

[3] Comp. Ambrose on this point, below, p. 157.

Gennadius emphatically asserts the completeness of Christ's propitiatory work,[1] and regards the statements of the Intercession as figures of speech which are added for the purpose of increasing man's assurance.

His words are :—

> *But for our full assurance, he has now embellished his exposition with figurative expressions through the word "He intercedes."* [2]

He compares the Intercession of Christ with that of the Holy Spirit, showing even more conclusively that he regarded it as something over and above the work of propitiation.

John of Damascus follows Gennadius in explaining the statements of the Intercession as anthropomorphic expressions which were used to set forth the great love of Christ.

He regards the fact that the Intercession is associated with Christ's Session *at the right hand* as proving that it was not intended to indicate inferiority, since the position *at the right hand* signifies equality.[3]

Theodorus Studita, writing of the dignity which has been conferred upon human nature through the exaltation of Christ, incidentally refers to that exaltation as itself constituting the Intercession. Human nature is now in heaven, the object of worship for all power, whether visible or invisible. In that nature, which He received from the Virgin, Jesus was crucified, restored to life, and in the end gloriously exalted, *showing Himself to the Father in our behalf.*[4]

[1] See above, p. 113.

[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.*, viii. 34 ; Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxv. 1704.

[3] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xcv. 511.

[4] *Sermo* VII. ; Migne, *P.G.*, xcix. 517. Comp. :—

Of two-fold Nature, Christ, the Giver
Of immortality and love,

Oecumenius affirms that the word *intercede*, which carries with it the idea of humility, can only be used of Christ according to His human nature.

He Who by His own authority raises the dead, remits sins does not need the Father's help in His work of saving men, as though He were unable to save by His own power. It is by virtue of the Incarnation that He prays, and intercedes with the Father to have mercy upon us.[1]

The Intercession is not a sign of Christ's inferiority as God, but a manifestation of His love.

Christ is said to intercede with the Father for us by the very fact that He took human nature upon Himself.[2]

Ascendeth to the Father's glory,
Ascendeth to the Throne above:

Slaves are set free and captives ransom'd:
The Nature that He made at first
He now presenteth to the Father
The chains of the damnation burst.

St. Joseph of the Studium. Transl. by Neale, *Hymns of the Eastern Church*, p. 148.

O that shame, now ended in that glory!
Pain untold, now lost in joy unknown!
Tell it out with praise, the whole glad story,
Human nature at the Father's Throne!

Declare, ye Angel Bands, that dwell on high,
How saw ye Him, the Victor, drawing nigh?
What strange new vision burst upon your sight?
One in the Form of Man, that claims by right,
The very Throne of God, the unapproached Light!
Id., ibid., pp. 150 f.

Thou, whose wounds are ever pleading,
And Thy Passion interceding.
Theotistus of the Studium, *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[1] *In Epist. ad Heb.* vii. 25; Migne, *P.G.*, cxix. 358.
[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34; Migne, cxviii. 493.

Commenting on Heb. viii. 1 ff., Oecumenius explains the words *ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσενέγκῃ* as referring to the offering once made. The context, he says, deals with the offering of sacrificial victims, and Christ had His own flesh which He offered. The reference to Christ's offering was inserted to explain why Christ, if He was a Priest for eternity, had also to die. It was that He might offer Himself as the victim.

Having died, for the purpose of the offering, and risen again, Christ was received up that He might have the very heaven as His abode, where He continues His priestly work by making intercession for us.[1]

Theophylact notices the two explanations of the Intercession which were current in his day: the one, that it is the continued manifestation of Christ's love through His acting as Ambassador for us; the other, that it is the mere fact of His presence in our nature reminding the Father of His love for men.

Theophylact himself explains the Intercession in the former sense. He argues that it implies no inferiority, for two reasons: (1) It is associated with Christ's Session at the right hand of God; (2) The Father Himself is said to beseech men (2 Cor. v. 20.).[2]

It should be noticed that Theophylact either ignored or was ignorant of the Western conception of continuous propitiation.[3]

(*b*) Western Writers

Clement of Rome speaks of Christ as *the High Priest*

[1] *Ἀναστὰς δὲ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνελήφθη ἵνα σχοίῃ τόπον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔνθα αὐτὸν ἱερᾶσθαι δεῖ. Ἱερᾶσθαι δὲ νόει τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.* Migne, *P.G.*, cxix. 361.

[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34; Migne, *P.G.*, cxxiv. 456.

[3] For Theophylact's insistence on the completed propitiation, see above, p. 114.

of all our offerings,[1] and in this connexion quotes Ps. cx. 1 and Heb. i. 13.

Jerome refers to the use which the Arians made of the statements of Christ's Intercession, and says in answer to them :—

> *God is not subject to forgetfulness, that He should be constantly appealed to on behalf of those whom He has chosen ; but Christ is said to intercede because He ever exhibits to the Father the manhood, which He took upon Him, as a pledge for us, and offers it, as the true and eternal High Priest.*[2]

These words can only mean that, in Jerome's opinion, the propitiatory offering of Christ continues. He ignores the significance of the Session, and confounds the Intercession with the Offering.

Ambrose's treatment of the Intercession is very similar, He speaks of Christ as *offering Himself here in image, there in truth where with the Father He intercedes for us as our advocate.*

The context shows quite clearly that Ambrose uses *offer* here in its sacrificial sense. He compares Christ's present offering of Himself with the former offerings of animals, and says that Christ offers Himself as Priest, to take away our sins.[3]

The effectiveness of the Intercession is assured by the fact that Christ is at the right hand of God, that is to say, is equal in honour to God. It is the intercession of one who, while being distinct from, is at the same time equal with the Father.[4]

[1] *Ep. c.* 36.

[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.*, viii. 34 ; *Opera*, Tom. xi. 872. Ed. Val. Veron. [3] *De off. Min.*, i. 48 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xvi. 94.

[4] *In Epist. ad Rom.*, viii. 34 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xvii. 129. Compare with this position Theodoret's emphasis on the Intercession of Christ as man. See above, p. 153.

Augustine associates Christ's Session with His Intercession, but he offers no explanation of the manner in which Christ intercedes.

> *Vide ne quem non vis credere resurgentem, sentias vindicantem. Qui enim non crediderit, jam judicatus est* (Joan iii. 18). *Nam qui modo sedet ad dexteram Patris advocatus pro nobis, inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos.*[1]

Leo the Great uses language which must be characterized as unguarded. He writes :—

> *In the Church of God there are neither valid priesthoods nor true sacrifices unless in the reality of our nature the true High Priest makes atonement for us, and the true Blood of the spotless Lamb makes us clean; for although He be set on the Father's right hand, yet in the same flesh which He took from the Virgin, He carries on the mystery of propitiation, as says the Apostle, "Christ Jesus who died, yea who also rose, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."* [2]

This statement is open to criticism on several grounds:—

1. Leo appears to confound propitiation as objectively made once and for all with the realization of atonement in the continual experience of the Church.
2. The result of this confusion is that propitiation is regarded as a continuous process, which is being carried on through the work of Christ in Heaven and that of the Priesthood on earth.

[1] *Sermo*, ccxv. 7; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1384. Ed. Bened. Par., 1836.

[2] *Epist.* lxxx. 2; Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 914.

3. The Intercession of Christ is identified with this continuous propitiatory work.
4. There is no attempt to bring the conception into line with the assertions of the completed propitiation that are found in the New Testament.

Primasius explains the Intercession as the presentation by Christ to His Father of the human nature which He took to Himself.

In his comments on Rom. viii. 34 he adopts the language of Jerome, for an answer to the Arian misinterpretation—

> *Solent Ariani dicere: minor est qui interpellat. Respondendum est, Dominum oblivionem non pati, ut pro illis semper commoneatur quos ipse justificavit. Sed in hoc interpellare dicitur, dum semper hominem, quem suscepit glorificatum, quasi nostrum pignus Patri ostendit et offert, ut verus et aeternus sacerdos.*[1]

Similarly in his exposition of Heb. vii. 25, he writes :—

> *Interpellat autem pro nobis per hoc quod humanam naturam assumpsit pro nobis, quam assidue ostendit vultui Dei pro nobis, et miseretur secundum utramque substantiam.*[2]

Gregory the Great seems to have been the first to treat specifically the question as to whether Christ's Intercession is to be regarded as *vocalis et realis*, or as the intercession of His presence in our nature with the Father.

Thus he says :—

> *For the only begotten Son to intercede for man is to show Himself in His manhood with the co-eternal Father; and for Him to have made supplication for human nature is to have taken upon Himself the same nature in the height of His Divinity. The Lord intercedes therefore*

[1] Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii. 466. [2] *Ibid.*, 731.

for us, not by voice, but by pity, because He set the elect free from that condemnation, which He was unwilling that they should suffer, by taking it upon Himself (quia quod damnari in electis noluit, suscipiendo liberavit).[1]

Again he writes :—

He speaks to the Father in our behalf, in that He presents Himself like unto us. Since His speaking or intercession is His showing of Himself in His manhood in behalf of men.[2]

Gregory's indiscriminate use of the phrases *se ostendere, se exhibere, se demonstrare, se offerre,* shows that *se offere* had a recognized meaning, apart from that of sacrificial offering.[3]

The following passage illustrates the point :—

Precari etiam ei est se in humanitate assumpta pro salute nostra aeterno Patri continue exhibere ; quod dum sic se offerre non desinit, receptioni nostrae aditum ad vitam facit.[4]

Alcuin regards the Intercession as consisting in the Session at the right hand of the Father.

He says :—

Who is it who intercedes unless it be the joining to Christ's Deity of the human nature which He bore to the Father's throne, He Who ever lives and is able to save?[5]

[1] *Moral.*, xxii. *c.* 17 ; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxvi. 238. The language is adopted *verbatim* by Alulfus in his exposition of Rom. viii. 34.

[2] *Moral.*, xxiv. *c.* 2 ; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxvi. 288. Compare : *per incarnationem suam interpellans Patrem* and *incarnationis ejus oratio. Moral.*, xxiii. *c.* 5 ; Migne, lxxvi. 291.

[3] See above, p. 117.

[4] *In Prim. Ref. Exp., Lib.* i. *c.* 1 ; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxix. 45. For further illustration of Gregory's references to the Session in this connexion, see Migne, *P.L.*, lxxix. 602, 635.

[5] *Expos. in Ep. ad Heb.* vii. 25 ; Migne, *P.L.*, C. 1066 f.

Walafridus Strabo, commenting on Rom. viii. 34, explains Christ's Session at the right hand of the Father as signifying His equality with God and the consequent effectiveness of His supplication. His intercession is the continual presenting to the Father's face (*vultui paterno offert*) of the manhood which He assumed, and of the painful death which He endured for us.[1]

Bruno of Chartreuse follows Gregory the Great in excluding from his conception of the Intercession the idea that it is actual, vocal prayer.

He says :—

> *Christ is said to intercede not because He cries aloud with His voice, but because the assumed humanity, which is in the presence of God, continually knocks at the door of the Divine heart (Deum pulsat),*[2] *and makes God mindful of performing that for which the Son was willing to become man : even as an ambassador, by the representation alone of his person, would remind him, to whom he had been sent, of his mission, by the mere fact that He re-presented himself to him.*[3]

Radulphus Ardens says that Christ still performs the office of Priest, on earth through the ministry of the Church in teaching, baptizing, absolving, in heaven by His intercession for us which consists in the presentation to the Father of His humanity with the signs of the Passion.[4]

Herveus says that Christ lives eternally not only as

[1] Migne, *P.L.*, cxiv. 499. Peter Lombard makes *verbatim* use of this passage in his exposition. See Migne, *P.L.*, cxci. 1452.

[2] Comp. *caro ejus ad hoc semper in caelis vivit, ut repraesentatione sua jugiter pulset Patrem pro nobis. Id., In Epist. ad Heb.*, vii. 25 ; Migne, *P.L.*, cliii. 527.

[3] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34 ; Migne, *P.L.*, cliii 76 f.

[4] *Hom. de Sanct.*, xxv. ; Migne, *P.L.*, clv. 1586 f.

the reward of His obedience, but also for the purpose of always offering Himself.

He explains the perpetual offering as the showing of Himself to the Father with a view to our glory and exaltation, *for by that nature in which He is High Priest, that is, His human nature which He carried with Him to heaven, He intercedes for us.*[1]

Abelard shows that the Session is predicated of Christ according to His humanity, and that it is in itself the Intercession. Christ intercedes for us *by continually presenting to the Father's eyes that very humanity, in which He suffered for us, and so, as a mediator, reconciling us to Him.* The intercession is effected *through the very substance of our nature.*

Abelard illustrates the point by a reference to what he conceives to be the nature of the intercession of the saints.

He says :—

> *We say that the saints themselves intercede and pray for us rather by their state of love* (*affectu charitatis*) *or by the prayer of their merits, than by the appeal of their voice* (*provocatione vocis*).[2]

The Abbot Guillelmus says that Christ's Session at the right hand of God signifies His Judgment and Sovereignty, but that the Intercession consists in His appearing to the Father in the humanity which He took upon Himself for our sake.[3]

[1] *In Epist. ad Heb.* vii. 25 ; Migne, *P.L.*, clxxxi. 1590. The passage is quoted *verbatim* by Peter Lombard. See Migne, *P.L.*, cxcii. 456.

[2] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34 ; Migne, *P.L.*, clxxviii. 908.

[3] *Exp. in Ep. ad Rom.* ; Migne, *P.L.*, clxxx. 642.

In the sixteenth century the manner of Christ's Intercession was a subject of controversy between the Lutheran and the *Reformed* Parties. The Lutherans maintained that the Intercession was *vocalis et realis*: the *Reformed* theologians affirmed that the reality of the Intercession was constituted by the Presence of Christ in man's nature with the Father. This was not the only, or the most important point of divergence between them. The questions as to the nature of Christ's Presence in the Lord's Supper, and the ubiquity of His humanity, had introduced bitter conflict, but the gulf was widened by the difference of opinion about the Intercession.

Melanchthon explains the Intercession as the continual application to us of the merit of Christ, that is to say, of the obedience of Christ which satisfies the justice of God. It is as seated with the Father that Christ intercedes, but the Intercession is more than His mere Presence in our nature with the Father.

> *He Who reigns with the Father, and sees the heart of the Father, both intercedes for us in that secret union (concilio), and brings our groanings to the Father, who receives us for the sake of the Son.*[1]

Illustration of the other interpretation is afforded in the writings of Calvin, Peter Martyr, and Beza.

Calvin writes as follows:—

> *We must not measure this intercession by our carnal judgment; for we must not suppose that He humbly supplicates the Father with bended knees and extended hands; but as He appears continually, as One Who died and rose again, and as His death and resurrection stand in the place of eternal intercession, and have the efficacy of a powerful prayer for reconciling and rendering the*

[1] *In Epist. ad Rom.* viii. 34; *Opera*, p. 156, Ed. Witt., 1564.

Father propitious to us, He is justly said to intercede for us.[1]

Peter Martyr alludes to the use which the Arians had made of the Intercession of Christ, and mentions with approval Chrysostom's answer to them, that it is not to be thought of as a proper equivalent of supplication, but rather as a means of expressing Christ's love and goodwill.[2] He then mentions another possible answer, as though it was something new, though as a matter of fact it had been previously given by Theodoret, that the Son prays to the Father, not as God, but as man. He appeals for support of this interpretation to the fact that the context of Rom. viii. 34 refers to the humanity of Christ.[3]

But it is evident that he preferred the interpretation of Chrysostom, for in another passage he distinguishes the Intercession of Christ from that of the saints, on the ground that

Christ's making intercession for us is nothing else than that He is always present with the Father, and that by His presence (because He was delivered unto death for us) the mercy of God is most readily stirred up towards the elect.[4]

[1] *Comment. on Rom.* viii. 34, p. 325, Ed. John Owen. Comp. *He continually appears in the presence of the Father as our Advocate and Intercessor; He attracts the eyes of the Father to His righteousness so as to avert them from our sins. Institutes*, Bk. ii., chap. xvi.; vol. 1, p. 417, Ed. John Allen, 1844.

[2] He criticizes Chrysostom's treatment of 2 Cor. v. 20 as proving that prayer is not necessarily a mark of inferiority. Calvin prefers to render ὡς by *as though*, and regards it as expressing similitude and illustrating the great affection with which the Apostle besought men.

[3] *Commonplaces*, Pt. iii. 12, 14, p. 307, Ed. Marr., 1574.

[4] *Op. cit.*, iii. 13, 17.

Beza regarded the Offering and the Intercession as two distinct parts of Christ's priestly work. The former is over, the latter remains. It consists partly in the application of the merits of the perpetually efficacious sacrifice (*perenne sacrificium*) and partly in the fact that in Christ alone we please and are heard by the Father.[1]

The English Reformers followed, in the main, the Lutheran conception of the Intercession.

Cranmer seems to have held the view that Christ's Intercession consisted in a series of acts, rather than in the mere fact of His perpetual presence with the Father. In *The Institution of a Christian Man*, which may be regarded as representing his opinion, these words occur :—

> *And I believe, that . . . our Saviour Jesu Christ is of His own goodness not only more ready always than any other creature in the world is, to help me by His mediation and intercession ; but also that whensoever I do invocate and call upon Him in right faith and hope with full intent and purpose to amend and return from my naughty life, He presenteth and exhibiteth unto the sight of His Father His most blessed body, as it was wounded, crucified, and offered up in sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, and so from time to time maketh continual request and intercession unto God His Father for the remission of all my sins, and for my reconciliation unto His favour.*[2]

Hooper emphasized the fact of Christ's Intercession as against the practice of invocation of the saints, and urged the preaching of it as the right way of getting rid of the practice. Christ is seated, he says, as minister and servant

[1] *In Epist. ad Heb.* vii. 25.
[2] *Works, Remains and Letters*, p. 90 P.S.

of the saints on earth, and as the faithful ambassador with *the Father of Heaven;* and as such He offers to the Father the prayers of the faithful.[1]

Bradford speaks of Christ *always praying for us* in the presence of God,[2] *always appearing in God's sight* for man,[3] being *always in the sight of the Father for me, to send me down gifts, to pray for me,*[4] *appearing before God for ever, a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedec, that through Him we might have free access to come to God's throne, now rather of grace than of justice.*[5]

Bradford attached great importance to the Session of Christ; he frequently dwells on it in his meditations, and in his doctrinal works. But it was not the mere fact of Christ's presence with the Father which constituted, in his conception, the Intercession: it was rather the Session as giving effectiveness to actual prayer.

Coverdale speaks of Christ as *the high and glorious King, clothed with our nature,* who has

> *entered into our royal palace, as one that mindeth faithfully to despatch our affairs. He is our mediator and advocate in the presence of the Father; notwithstanding our sins committed, we have a free entrance unto God by Him.*[6]

Again he says:—

> *The Lord Jesus Christ is entered into the celestial sanctuary that He may there show Himself for us, and by the virtue of His sacrifice pray for us.*[7]

From the close of the Reformation Period until the

[1] *Early Writings*, pp. 34, 60 P.S.
[2] *Sermons, Meditations*, p. 104 P.S.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[6] *Works, Fruitful Lessons*, p. 383 P.S.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 461.

middle of the nineteenth century the Intercession was generally regarded both by English and Continental divines as consisting in actual supplication.

Jeremy Taylor distinguishes between the completed offering on the Cross and the perpetual representation of it by Christ in Heaven, and by His servants on earth through *prayers and the Sacrament*. This perpetual representation is the Intercession.

> *There He sits, a High Priest continually, and offers still the same one perfect sacrifice; that is, still represents it as having been once finished and consummate in order to perpetual and never-failing events.*[1]

Jeremy Taylor was forced into this conception of the Intercession by the belief that priesthood involved continual offering; and that belief was based upon the language of Heb. viii. 3.

> *That he is a priest in heaven, appears in the large discourses and direct affirmatives of St. Paul* (Heb. vii. 24). *That there is no other Sacrifice to be offered, but that on the Cross, it is evident, because "he hath but once appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and, therefore, since it is necessary that he hath something to offer so long as he is a priest, and there is no other sacrifice but that of himself offered upon the Cross* (Heb. viii. 3), *it follows that Christ in heaven perpetually offers and represents that sacrifice to His Heavenly Father, and in virtue of that obtains all good things for His Church.*[2]

It is clear, from the context, that this language may not be taken to signify continuous propitiatory offering.

[1] *Life and Death of Christ, Disc.* xix.; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 296, Ed. Heber.

[2] *The Worthy Communicant*, i. 4; *Works*, vol. xv. p. 437.

Christ, he says, *has reconciled us to God by the death of the Cross; in the virtue of the Cross, He intercedes for us and represents an eternal sacrifice in the heavens on our behalf;* what Christ does in heaven, and has commanded us to do on earth is *to commemorate this sacrifice, by humble prayer and thankful record: Christ in virtue of His sacrifice on the Cross, intercedes for us with His Father, so does the minister of Christ's priesthood here; that the virtue of the eternal sacrifice may be salutary and effectual to all the needs of the Church.*

In other words, Christ is said to offer continually His sacrifice, and thereby to intercede for man, because He continually pleads the merits of the one sacrifice offered upon the Cross.

Isaac Barrow regarded the Intercession as signifying literal supplication. He speaks of Christ as interceding with God for the effect of His sacrifice, and also as praying for us, so as to get conferred on us whatever is needful for our salvation.[1]

Grotius explains the Intercession by the phrase *res Deo commendare, spiritum impetrare.*

He adopts an unusual view of the construction of Rom. viii. 34. Regarding ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει as predicate, he paraphrases the passage as follows:—

> *Is ipse qui nostra causa mortuus, qui nostra causa resuscitatus est, et ad dextram Patris consedit, is est qui nostras res Deo commendat.*[2]

Deyling regards the Intercession as involving actual supplication. Discussing the various interpretations offered, he says:—

> *Alii igitur interpretes rectius censuerunt, Christum*

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 367, Ed. 1861.
[2] *Annot. in Nov. Test.*, Tom. ii. p. 724, Ed. Amst. 1679.

in caelis apud Patrem pro nobis interpellare non solum interpretative, vulnera sua Patri exhibendo, justitiamque ac merita sua ei sistendo, sed oratione etiam proprie dicta.[1]

Archbishop Tillotson distinguishes the Intercession from the sacrifice.

The latter was the means of purchasing blessings, the former is the means of making them effectual for us.

He died once to purchase these benefits, but He lives for ever to procure them for us, and to apply them to us.

The Intercession is one of the benefits of Christ's Ascension and Exaltation. Christ intercedes by the representation of that sacrifice which He offered for our sins, and of that blood which He shed for us.[2]

In addition to that of obtaining grace for us, the purpose of the Intercession is also to offer up our prayers to God.

In virtue of His meritorious obedience and sufferings, which He presents to God continually, He offers up our prayers to Him, and pleads our cause with Him, and represents to Him all our wants and necessities, and procures for us a favourable answer to our prayers, and supplies of grace and strength, proportionate to our temptations and infirmities.[3]

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth has no explanation to offer of the Intercession of Christ. The probability is that he regarded it as a form of activity which is best represented to our minds by the conception of oral petition, and that he had not realized that the interpretation

[1] *Observat.*, Par. iv. pp. 574 f., Ed. 1757.

[2] *Serm.* xlvi.; *Works*, vol. i. pp. 442 f., Ed. 1728. Comp. *Serm.* cxlii.; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 264.

[3] *Works*, vol. i., p. 442.

has a history of its own. Otherwise it is difficult to imagine the omission of reference to anything except the simple fact, in a commentary which dwells, oftentimes at length, on the history of exegesis.

But incidentally we can certainly conclude that Wordsworth did not associate Christ's Intercession with any idea of continuous propitiatory work. This becomes evident when we notice the emphatic declarations of the completed sacrifice and offering, with which his comments abound.

Alford's commentary on the Greek Testament affords an illustration of the comparative neglect with which the doctrine of the Intercession of Christ has been treated in the past.

In his comment on Rom. viii. 34, he contents himself with giving a short quotation from de Wette, which offers no kind of guidance as to the significance of the Intercession.

His note on Heb. vii. 25 contains a brief explanation of the Intercession as implying

> *the whole mediatorial work, which the exalted Saviour performs for His own with His Heavenly Father, either by reference to His past death of blood by which He has bought them for Himself, or by continued intercession for them.*

This conception of constant supplication is assumed as the only possible meaning of the Intercession, and no reference is made to the history of the doctrine in the Church.

Meyer interprets the Session in a strangely literal way. He refuses to treat it as a metaphor or symbolical representation of rest, sovereignty, felicity, and equality with God, on the ground that in Mc. xvi. 19 it is reported

not as an object of sense-perception, but as a consequence, that had set in, of the Ascension. He affirms that it is to be left as a local fact, an actual occupation of a seat on the Divine throne from which hereafter Christ will descend to judgment.[1]

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Meyer also insists on a literal interpretation of the Intercession as being *vocalis et oralis*. He says that it must be so conceived, because it is made by the glorified God-Man.[2]

Delitzsch also adopts the Lutheran conception of the Intercession: He says:—

> *Its method of procedure is not a mere silent presentation of Himself by the Redeemer before God, but an eloquent intercession on our behalf in reference to each individual among His redeemed, and every single case of need. Its foundation right is the atoning sacrifice once for all made here upon the Cross.*[3]

Similarly Godet says:—

> *By His intercession we are assured of His precious interposition at such moments of spiritual weakness, as that in reference to which He declared to Peter: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."* [4]

[1] *The Gospels of Mark and Luke*, vol. i. p. 255, Ed. Dickson, 1890. It can be conceded that the Session at the right hand of God implies locality, inasmuch as it is predicated of One Who is human as well as Divine; but this is no argument against the manifestly symbolical form of the language.

[2] *The Epistle to the Romans* (viii. 34), vol. ii. p. 102, Ed. Dickson, 1874.

[3] *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (vii. 25), vol. i. p. 372, Engl. Transl., Kingsbury.

[4] *The Epistle to the Romans* (viii. 34), vol. ii. p. 120, Engl. Transl., Cusin.

This is important as illustrating the ground of the divergence between the two conceptions of the Intercession. The one takes

The majority of the later English divines have concentrated their thought about the Intercession of Christ upon the fact of His Presence on the Throne.

Liddon, in his Bampton Lectures, abandoned the anthropomorphic conception of the Intercession which the English Reformation theology had emphasized. Christ intercedes above by His very Presence. He does not bend as a suppliant before the Sanctity of God; He is a Priest upon His Throne. It is the Divinity which makes the Intercession in Heaven so omnipotent a force. That which constitutes the Intercession is Christ's perpetual presentation of Himself before the Father. It lasts until the Judgment as the enduring antitype to the High Priest's presentation of the Victim's blood in the Holy of Holies.[1]

Bishop Westcott interprets the Session of Christ at the right hand of the Father as expressing under a natural image the three ideas of an accomplished work, of a Divine Sovereignty, and, by consequence, of an efficacious intercession. The last he explains as signifying Christ's changeless love.

> *The love of God can know no change. He Who showed His love in living and dying for us, loves no less now when that Life and Death have passed into triumph. Nay rather, if we dare to follow the course of human feeling, we may thank God that the joy of gathering the fruits of toil adds intensity to love.*[2]

its stand on the ordinary significance of intercession, and is able to illustrate it by such references as the above: the other starts from the study of the Levitical type, according to which *standing in the Presence* was everything, and words were nothing (comp. Bishop Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 229).

[1] *The Divinity of our Lord*, Lect. viii. p. 493, Ed. 1892.

[2] *The Historic Faith*, p. 82

The Bishop does not make plain in this passage what he understands to be the nature of the Intercession, but that we can discover from his commentary on *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, where he interprets it in the light of the Levitical Type. The representative of Israel, having been cleansed by the application of blood, *was able to sustain the awful fellowship for which man was made.* He fulfilled his work by *simply standing before the Lord.* There were no words; there was no vocal intercession.

The fulfilment of the type by Christ takes three forms: (1) He represents man before God (Heb. vii. 25 ff.; ix. 24); (2) He brings man's prayers to God (Heb. xiii. 15); (3) He secures access for man to God (Heb. iv. 16; x. 19 ff.). There is no authority, says the Bishop for going beyond this.

> *The modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven His Passion, "offering His blood" on behalf of men, has no foundation in the Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work. He pleads, as older writers truly expressed the thought, by His Presence on the Father's Throne. Meanwhile men on earth in union with Him enjoy continually through His Blood what was before the privilege of one man on one day in the year.*[1]

Dr. William Milligan refers to the history of the interpretation of the Intercession in language which the facts do not justify. He writes:—

> *It was not imagined by the Fathers of the Church, nor has the idea been entertained by later theologians, that the intercession necessarily takes the form of spoken words.*[2]

[1] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 229.
[2] *The Ascension of Our Lord*, p. 149 f.

If this statement merely means that there is no such thing as speech, as we understand it, in the spiritual sphere, it is self-evident. But it obviously implies more than that. It is an assertion that the Intercession has not been conceived of as *vocalis et oralis;* and yet that was, as we have noticed, an actual matter of controversy during the Reformation Period.

Dr. Milligan is happier in the statement of his own conception, which is that Christ's *very presence in His humanity is enough to secure the hearing and answering of His prayers.* And the intercession, he says, must not be limited to prayer. The word ἐντυγχάνειν means more than that. It embraces—

> *every act by which the Son, in dependence on the Father, in the Father's name, and with the perfect concurrence of the Father, takes His own with Him into the Father's presence, in order that whatever He Himself enjoys in the communications of His Father's love may become also theirs.*[1]

We have previously noticed[2] Canon Moberly's concepton of the perpetual offering of Christ, and it is only necessary here to add that he identifies Christ's Intercession with the Offering.

> *Christ's offering in heaven is a perpetual ever-present offering of life, whereof "to have died" is an ever-present and perpetual attribute. . . .*
>
> *Christ is a priest for ever, not as it were by a perpetual series of acts of memory, not by multiplied and ever remoter acts of commemoration of a death that is past,*

[1] For Dr. Milligan's view of the Intercession as implying continuous offering, see above, pp. 143 f.

[2] See above, pp. 138, 144 (footnote).

but by the eternal presentation of a life which eternally is the "life that died." [1]

He adds as a footnote :—

The words "pleading" or "presenting," in this connexion, must not be understood as describing anything corresponding to specific acts done, or words spoken, by Christ in His glory. His glorified presence is *an eternal presentation; He pleads by what He is.*

Dimock repudiates the idea of continued sacrificial function (in the sense of propitiatory offering), but insists at the same time that such repudiation does not militate against a high view of the sacerdotal work and power and dignity of Him who is *the eternal Priest upon His throne of glory.*

Is it nothing that He has entered heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us? How much there is in the true view of that appearing! Sacrifice and offering for sin, indeed, there is not, but good evidence that the One Sacrifice has been offered and accepted.[2]

We disclaim for the sacerdotium of Christ any continuation or iteration of sacrifice or oblation. We utterly disclaim and deny it. . . . But we claim for the Priesthood of Christ all that the needs of sinful humanity can ask or desire from the past or the present.[3]

Dimock quotes with approval the following words of Dr. Owen :—

Christ's intercession is best apprehended as the representation of Himself, and the efficacy of His sacrifice in heaven before the throne of God.[4]

[1] *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 246.
[2] *Our One Priest on High*, p. 70, Ed. Longmans, 1910.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 74 (footnote).

Bishop Moule writes :—

Scripture represents Him as interceding, not as a suppliant, but with the majesty of the accepted and glorified Son once slain. He does not stand before the throne, but is seated on it. . . . It is vain, of course, to ask how in detail He thus acts for us. The essence of the matter is His union with His people, and His perpetual presence, in that union, with the Father, as the once slain Lamb.[1]

Dr. Sanday and Dr. Headlam appear to interpret the Intercession as involving actual petition.

In their commentary on the Epistle to the Romans they refer to the subject in the following words :—

It is not a dead Christ on Whom we depend, but a living. It is not only a living Christ but a Christ enthroned, a Christ in power. It is not only a Christ in power, but a Christ of ever active sympathy, constantly (if we may so speak) at the Father's ear, and constantly pouring in intercessions for His struggling people on earth.[2]

Professor Swete writes :—

The intercession of the Ascended Christ is not a prayer but a life. The New Testament does not represent Him as an orante, *standing ever before the Father, and with outstretched arms, like the figure in the mosaics of the Catacombs, and with strong crying and tears pleading our cause in the presence of a reluctant God ; but as a throned Priest-King, asking what He will from a Father who always hears and grants His request. Our Lord's life in heaven is His prayer.*[3]

[1] *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 103.
[2] *The Epistle to the Romans*, viii. 34 ; *Int. Crit. Comm.*, p. 221.
[3] *The Ascended Christ*, p. 95.

CHAPTER V

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH

Alleluia, not as orphans
Are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia, He is near us,
Faith believes, nor questions how;
Though the clouds from sight received Him
When the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget His promise,
"I am with you evermore."

WILLIAM CHATTERTON DIX.

THE bearing of the doctrine of the Session upon men's conceptions as to the nature of Christ's Presence with His Church, and particularly in relation to the Lord's Supper, is a question which has belonged in the main to the later history of Western thought.

At the close of the fourth century this aspect of the subject received repeated and emphatic treatment in the writings of Augustine, but with that exception the references to it are incidental and infrequent until the period of the Reformation.

It was only when the mediaeval conception of the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist had come to be seriously challenged that attention was at all generally drawn to the significance, in this connexion, of the Heavenly Session.

(*a*) Pre-Reformation Writers

Ambrose incidentally, and in a non-controversial context, refers to this aspect of the Session. He maintains that Christ, as man, is to be sought neither upon earth, nor in earth, but in heaven, where He sitteth at the right hand of His Father.

> *Therefore we ought not to seek Thee upon the earth nor in the earth, nor according to the flesh, if we wish to find Thee; for now we know Christ no more after the flesh. Stephen sought Thee not upon the earth, who saw Thee standing on the right hand of God; but Mary, who sought Thee on the earth, could not touch Thee. Stephen touched Thee because he sought Thee in heaven.*[1]

But this limitation applies only to the manhood of Jesus. Ambrose insists on the omnipresence of His Majesty, that is His Deity. From this point of view the Session is to be conceived of as connoting ubiquity.[2]

Augustine emphasizes the distinction between the Presence of Christ as God and His Presence as man; and maintains that the Session is predicated of Christ according to His human nature.[3] It is not that he interprets the Session literally: on the contrary, he treats it as symbolical of the sovereignty and bliss upon which Christ entered as man.[4] But it is quite clear that he regarded it as implying and involving the absence from earth of the human nature of Jesus. He speaks of Christ's immortal body being in heaven from whence He is to come to judge the living and the dead.[5]

[1] *Exp. Evan. sec. Luc., Lib.* x. *c.* 160; Migne, *P.L.*, xv. 1844.
[2] Comp. *Lib.* x. 1 sq.; *Ibid.*, 1803.
[3] See e.g. *Sermo ad Catech.*, iii. 7; *Opera*, Tom. vi. 973, Ed. Bened., Par., 1836.
[4] See e.g. *Sermo*, 213, 4; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1366: *De Fid. et Symb.*, *c.* 14; *Opera*, Tom. vi. 270: *De Agone*, *c.* 28; *Opera*, Tom. vi. 435. [5] *Sermo*, 214, 9; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1377.

He utters emphatic warning against the confounding of the two natures in Christ, and the consequent denial of the essential properties of the manhood. Writing to Dardanus he says :—

> *Do not doubt that the man Christ Jesus is now there from whence He is to come; and mindfully hold and faithfully keep the Christian confession, that He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and is to come from thence, and from nowhere else, to judge the living and the dead. . . . According to this nature* (formam), *He is not to be thought of as being everywhere. For we must beware of so deifying the manhood* (ne ita divinitatem astruamus hominis) *as to do away with the reality of the body.*[1]

Commenting on the words *Me ye have not always*, Augustine points out that they referred to Christ's bodily presence, and must be compared with His promise to be with His disciples until the end of the world, which referred to His Majesty, and His Divine care for His own. But the assumed body which Jesus took from the Virgin, in which He was crucified and manifested after the Resurrection,[2] this was to be withdrawn. And after the forty days of His continual bodily presence, He visibly ascended into heaven, and is not here. And yet while He sits there at the right hand of the Father, He is also here. For the presence of His Majesty was not withdrawn ; in that sense we have Christ always, but His bodily pres-

[1] *Epist.* clxxxvii. 10 ; *Opera*, Tom. ii. 1021.
For Augustine's treatment of the Final Subjection as proving the permanence of Christ's humanity, see above, pp. 91 f.

[2] It should be noted that St. Augustine entertained no conception of a continued presence of the Body of Jesus as spiritualized after the Resurrection.

ence the Church only enjoyed for a few days. She has Him now only by faith, with the eye she sees Him not.

> *How shall I have Him seeing that He is absent? How shall I stretch forth my hand to heaven, to have Him sitting there? Send forth faith, and thou hast held Him.*[1]

Augustine's writings suggest two reasons for the emphasis which he laid on this aspect of the Session.

In the first place, he laid stress in his teaching on the spiritual nature of the union between the Ascended Lord and the believer. *The flesh profiteth nothing.* The disciples had to learn to live by faith, and not by sight,[2] they had to be able to think of Christ primarily as God,[3] they had to allow their *fleshly love* to be transformed into a spiritual devotion.[4] And what the first disciples needed, that every age of the Church needs.

There was secondly the particular need in Augustine's day of combating theories which denied the bodily Ascension.[5]

It should be noted here, by way of contrast, that the emphasis which was laid upon this aspect of the Session in Reformation theology had a very different reason behind it, viz. the repudiation of the mediaeval explanation of the presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharistic Elements.

Care must be taken not to read this into Augustine's

[1] *In Ev. Joan. Tract.*, l. 4; *Opera*, Tom. iii. 2180, Ed. Bened. Par., 1837.

[2] Comp. e.g. *De Pecc. Merit. et Remiss.*, ii. 52; *Opera*, Tom. x. 279: *Sermo*, ccxxxv. 4; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1443.

[3] Comp. e.g. *Sermo* cclxiv. 4; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1571.

[4] Comp. e.g. *Sermo* cclxiv. 2; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1568: *Sermo* cclxx. 2; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1603.

[5] Comp. *De Agon. Christ.*, c. 27; *Opera*, Tom. vi. 435: *Sermo* cclxiii. 3; *Opera*, Tom. v. 1566.

language, as though it were its purpose and historical significance; the mediaeval conception was obviously unknown to him, otherwise he could not have failed to bring his language into relation to it. The nature of his references to the subject, and the reasons which he gives for making them, suggest that he was uttering a warning against possible misconceptions as to the nature of Christ's Presence, rather than against opinions actually held about it.

Leo the Great also regarded the Scriptural statements of the Session as indicating the absence from earth of the Body of Christ. After the Ascension the disciples fixed their thoughts upon the Deity of Him Who took His seat *at the right hand* of the Father, remembering that in His Divine Nature He had neither left the Father by descending, nor parted from them by ascending.[1]

Fulgentius denied the ubiquity of the humanity of Christ. When Christ died, His human nature was divided, the Body being laid in the grave, the Soul descending to Hades (*ad infernum*); but at the Ascension the whole humanity was withdrawn and exalted to heaven.[2]

John Wessel anticipated in part the position which the Reformers, other than the Lutherans, maintained a generation later. The Presence of Christ, in respect of His human nature, was a presence of virtue and efficacy, but it could be spoken of as a bodily presence. Christ is bodily present, in this sense, in the Celebrant and in the believer both at the Sacrament and at all other times. He says:—

> *Wherever the name of Christ is blessed and extolled now and for evermore . . . and however solitary and*

[1] *Sermo* lxxiv. 2 f.; Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 398.
[2] *Contra Serm. Fast., c.* xx.; Migne, *P.L.*, lxv. 526.

sequestered he who does it, there Christ is Himself truly present, not merely by His Divinity and goodness, but even bodily, by the whole beneficent efficacy of the power, skill, and fulness which are given to His flesh and blood.

When the Christian is by the inner man in Christ, Christ is always and altogether, by the outward and inner man, bodily present in the Christian, by the power of His gift of Grace, the skill of His wisdom, and the fulness of His liberality.[1]

Who can doubt, that the Lord Jesus is often bodily present with believers in their dying agonies, though He does not for that purpose forsake His seat in the heavenly places at the right hand of the Father? Who can doubt that this may take place apart from the sacrament as well as in it?[2]

Eastern writers contribute very little to the history of opinion on this aspect of the Session.

John of Damascus appears to have been the first to proclaim the actual identity of the Eucharistic Elements and the Body and Blood of the Lord.[3]

[1] *De Sacr. Euch.*, 24. See Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 528, Ed. Menzies, 1863.

[2] *De Sacr. Euch.*, 24. For the distinction which Wessel draws between the mental or spiritual, and the sacramental eating of the Body of Christ, see Ullman, *op. cit.*, p. 530; and compare the similar distinction which Aquinas draws between mental and visible incorporation into Christ, the former through faith, the latter through Baptism. See Goode, *Effects of Baptism*, p. 30, Ed. 1850.

[3] For an illustration of earlier Eastern thought we may notice the argument found in a work attributed to Chrysostom, that if vessels set apart for such a use as that of containing the sacred elements of the Eucharist must be kept sacred for their use, how much more our bodies which God has prepared for His own dwelling. This *a fortiori* argument suggests that the conception of identity noted above had no place in the writer's thought.

But he was conscious of the necessity of reconciling the idea with the Ascension and Session of Christ, and he explains it on the principle of augmentation. The body which was taken up does not come down from heaven, but the bread and wine are *transformed into the Body and Blood of God*. This extension of the Incarnation is effected by the Holy Spirit, whose creative power continues the work which it wrought at the original conception.[1]

Theodorus Studita discusses the doctrine of the union of the two natures in Christ, with special reference to the erroneous conception that the Incarnation involved the circumscribing of the Deity. He says that neither of the two natures has made the other new and different, or has ceased to be what it is ; nor is one changed by the other, for that would be a confusion which the Church has repudiated.

He asserts that Christ, even after the Resurrection, was circumscribed, in respect of His human nature, and especially His Body. But side by side with this he maintains with like emphasis that the Body and Blood of Christ are present in the Eucharistic Elements and denies that the Elements are figures or images.[2]

He himself says that in the vessels *is contained not the true Body of Christ, but the mystery of His Body. In Matth. Hom.* xi. ; *Opera*, Tom. vi. p. 796, Ed. Montfaucon, 1835. For a critical treatment of this passage see Dimock, *Eucharistic Worship*, pp. 109 ff. See also Waterland, *The Doctrine of the Eucharist*, pp. 535 ff., Ed. Oxon., 1896 ; Dimock, *Eucharistic Worship*, pp. 51 ff.

[1] *De Fid. Orth.* iv. 13 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xciv. 1144. For this as a step towards the later doctrine of Transubstantiation, see Dimock, *The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, pp. 55 ff., Ed. Longmans, 1910.

[2] *Antirrheticus*, i. 10 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xcix. 339 : ii. 47 ; *Ibid.*, 386.

(*b*) Writers of the Reformation Period and after

It was in the controversies of the Reformation Period that the relation of the Session to the Presence of Christ in the Church became a matter of keen debate.

The prominence which it then came to occupy was due as much to controversy amongst the Reformers themselves, as to disputes between the Reformers and the Roman divines. The Lutheran doctrine of Ubiquity was a *casus belli* equally with the mediaeval doctrine of Transubstantiation ; [1] and both alike were opposed on the ground, amongst others, of the Session of Christ in His human nature at the right hand of the Father.

We have already noticed the use which was made of the doctrine of the Session in the controversy about the propitiatory work of Christ. The application of the doctrine to the dispute about the Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper was somewhat different in kind. In the former case emphasis was laid on the significance of the Session, as indicating rest and cessation from propitiatory offering. In this controversy, thought was concentrated on the meaning of *the right hand of the Father.*

Is *the right hand* of God to be associated with the idea of locality, or is it a synonym for omnipresence ? The answer to the question involved the further consideration as to whether the humanity of Christ can be conceived of as being omnipresent. This was the really crucial point. The idea of locality was associated by the Reformers with *the right hand* of God because they regarded the humanity of Christ as necessarily circumscribed. They did not regard the humanity of Christ as circum-

[1] Comp. Coverdale's reference to the *fifteen years of hot controversy* between Luther and Zwinglius. *A Treatise on the Sacrament ; Works, Fruitful Lessons,* etc., Engl. Transl., p. 464, P.S. See also Martensen, *Dogmatics,* pp. 326 f., Engl. Transl., Urwick.

scribed because *the right hand* of God signifies locality. The doctrine of the humanity of Christ lay at the root of the whole controversy.

Luther, commenting on the Creed, explains Christ's Session at *the right hand of the Father* as signifying that He is set over all things in heaven, earth, and under the earth (*apud inferos*) as King and Lord, and is therefore able to be present with the believer in all his dangers and to help him against all his adversaries.[1]

Luther charges the *Sacramentaries* with holding a puerile conception of heaven as a place where Christ sits on a golden throne placed near the Father's throne, and asserts that this is the reason for their denial of the presence of the Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper.[2] But he admits that the true source of the conception is the opinion of St. Augustine that the body with which Christ rose cannot be in different places at the same time.[3]

He urges against them the idea that *the right hand* of God does not signify locality but the omnipotence of God, which must of necessity be everywhere (*quae simul nusquam esse potest, et tamen ubique esse necesse habet*).

He alludes to the work of God in creation, as proving that the hand of God which creates must be present everywhere, and cannot be otherwise.

[1] *Explicatio Symboli ; Opera,* Tom. vii. p. 124. Ed. Wit., 1558.

[2] The injustice of this criticism can be seen by comparing the following words of Bullinger: *When the right hand of God is taken in this sense* (i.e. as the place appointed for them that are saved, and the everlasting felicity in heaven), *then "to sit" doth signify to rest from all labour, and to live quietly and in happy state. . . . Our Lord, being delivered from all trouble and mortal infirmities, doth now in His humanity both rest and rejoice in the very local place of heaven, where we believe that both our souls and bodies shall be and live for ever.—Decades,* vol. i. p. 147, P.S.

[3] Luther, *Def. Verb. Caen ; Opera,* Tom. vii. pp. 391 f.

To the objection of the *Sacramentaries* that body is not spirit, Luther replies that if God found a way by which His essence should be in all creatures, and separately in each, it is not to be imagined that He knew no way by which His Body should be wholly present in many places at the same time. He takes refuge in a pious refusal to limit our idea of God's work by our own understanding.

His argument is summed up by himself in the following words :—

> *The Body of Christ sits at the right hand of God. But the right hand of God is in all places. Therefore the right hand of God is most certainly even in the bread and wine on the Table. Further, where the right hand of God is, there must also be Christ's Body and Blood.*[1]

Luther's conception is open to criticism on the ground of his use of the *A posse ad esse* argument. It is enough for him that a thing is possible : and because it is possible, therefore it is. But this confounds faith with credulity, and ignores the fact that faith must take account not merely of possibilities but also of evidence.

It is also open to serious objection on the ground that it involves a confusion of the two natures in Christ. To allege that because Christ is omnipresent as God therefore His Body is also omnipresent, is to predicate of the humanity properties which belong only to the Deity. The hypostatic union permits, it is true, the interchange of language, commonly known as *communicatio idiomatum*, but interchange of the essential properties of the two natures would involve the nullifying of both.

It must also be noticed that Luther's conception of the Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic Elements is

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 393.

essentially independent of the Priesthood. The ubiquity of Christ's Body is involved, according to Luther's teaching, in the fact that Christ is omnipresent as God. But the Divine omnipresence is not dependent on the words and acts of human Priesthood. And this is one of the essential differences between the Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation, and the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation. It is not merely a difference in the way of explaining the relation that exists between the Presence and the Elements, it is also, and much more, a difference of conception as to the way in which the relation is effected.

Tindale criticizes Sir Thomas More for using the *A posse ad esse* argument, *that is to wit, God may do it; ergo, It is done. God may make His Body in many, or in all, places at once; ergo, it is in many, or in all, places at once.*[1]

Tindale claims that it is a question with him, not of faith (for if evidence requires, he will both receive it and hold it fast), but of evidence, and that evidence must be the *express words of Holy Scripture, the written word of our Faith.*[2]

He maintains that More's theory involves a confusion of the two natures in Christ, and is inconsistent with Christ's words *Doth this offend you? What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?* which means,

> *If it offend you to eat my flesh while I am here, it shall much more offend you to eat it when My body shall be gone out of sight, ascended into heaven, there sitting*

[1] *Answer to More*, pp. 230 ff., P.S. For similar criticisms by Jeremy Taylor, see below, p. 205.

[2] Comp. *The question is, not what God can do, but what His word bears.* Calvin's *Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 161, Ed. Bev. 1849.

on the right hand of My Father, until I am come again, as I went, that is, to judgment.[1]

Tindale here, and elsewhere,[2] insists on the Session as indicating the continuance of the state of bodily absence, which had been visibly inaugurated by the Ascension. And, to illustrate the point, he cites the phrases *I go hence, I go to the Father, I leave the world, I shall be no more in the world, I come to Thee, Poor men have ye ever with you, but Me shall ye not always have with you.* In the place of the Presence to which such passages refer, there has been substituted the Presence in and by the Holy Spirit.[3]

Cranmer alleges the statements of Christ's Session in heaven against the Roman doctrine *that the same body, really, corporally, naturally, and sensibly, is in this world still and that in an hundred thousand places at one time, being enclosed in every pyx and bread consecrated.*[4]

He likens the corporal Presence of Christ to the Sun which *corporally is ever in heaven, and nowhere else, and yet by his operation and virtue is here in earth, by whose influence and virtue all things in the world be corporally regenerated, increased, and grow to their perfect state: so likewise our Saviour Christ bodily and corporally is in heaven, sitting at the right hand of His Father, although spiritually He hath promised to be present with us upon earth unto the world's end.*[5]

It should be noticed that Cranmer has no doctrine of a spiritual Presence of Christ in the consecrated Elements. The contrast which he invariably institutes, as representing the divergence between the doctrine of Rome and

[1] *Answer to More*, p. 239, P.S.

[2] Comp. *op. cit.*, p. 250. [3] Comp. *op. cit.*, p. 252.

[4] *Answer to Gardiner*, Book iii.; *On the Lord's Supper*, p. 52, P.S. Comp. Grindal, *Fruitful Dialogue*, p. 55, P.S.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

that of the English Reformers, is between the corporal Presence of Christ in the Elements and the spiritual Presence in the heart of the believer, which is assured to him not only by the sacramental bread and wine, but also by the promise of Christ's word.[1] Thus he writes :—

> *We do not a little vary from the heinous errors of the Papists. For they teach that Christ is in the bread and wine, but we say (according to the truth) that He is in them that worthily eat and drink the bread and wine. . . . The truth is that He is neither corporally in the bread and wine, nor in or under the form and figures of them, but is corporally in heaven and spiritually in His lively members, which be His temples where He inhabiteth.*
>
> *They say that Christ is corporally under or in the form of bread and wine : we say that Christ is not there, neither corporally nor spiritually ; but in them that worthily eat and drink the bread and wine He is spiritually, and corporally in heaven.*[2]

Cranmer regards the Session as an event in time belonging to the Incarnate Christ, and as signifying *that Christ (as concerning His Body and His Manhood) is in heaven*. He says that this *hath ever been the Catholic faith of Christian people ;*[3] and that the Roman doctrine that *Christ's natural Body is really and naturally both with us here in earth, and sitteth at the right hand of His Father in heaven* is a new faith, and involves *two horrible heresies* : (1) It confounds the two natures, attributing to His humanity what only appertaineth to His Divinity. (2) It divides the human nature, making of one Body of

[1] Comp. *op. cit.*, pp. 52, 71.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 54. For Cranmer's explanation of his sacramental language, based on that of the Fathers, see *op. cit.*, pp. 55 f.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

Christ two Bodies, one which is in heaven, another which is on earth here with us in every bread and wine that is consecrated.[1]

Hooper charges those who say that *the natural Body of Christ can be here any way corporally* with forgetfulness of the words of the Creed, *sedet ad dexteram Patris, inde venturus est.*[2]

He criticizes the Lutheran conception of *the right hand of God* as betokening no place but the whole power of God, and of the Session as signifying that Christ in His humanity is everywhere as His Deity is, on the grounds, first, that the Scriptural statements of the Ascension signified mutation of place and could only be predicated of the humanity; and next, that the conception involves confusion between heaven and hell, seeing that heaven is alleged to be everywhere.

He maintains that the Body of Christ, seated *at the right hand* of God, is as truly human as it was upon earth.[3]

Ridley declares that the controversy between *the Papists and Reformers* on the subject of the Lord's Supper can all be traced to the one source, viz. the question as to whether the matter of the Sacrament is the natural substance of bread or the natural substance of Christ's own Body.[4]

He says that the Reformers hold that the Body of

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 100 f. See also *Works, Remains, and Letters*, pp. 423 ff., 453, P.S.

[2] *Declaration of Christ and His Office, c.* 8; *Early Writings*, p. 65, P.S. Comp. *Later Writings*, p. 153, P.S.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 67, 193. Comp. *Later Writings*, p. 36.

[4] *Brief Declaration*, p. 106, Ed. Moule. Communion in one kind was affirmed to be the decree of the Holy Ghost in the Church, having for one of its purposes the assertion of this doctrine, that Christ is *wholly both flesh and blood under the form of bread.* See Ridley, *Works*, p. 269, P.S.

Christ is present by grace, but not in the natural substance of the human and assumed nature, which remains in heaven and so shall be until the later day when He shall come again in glory.[1]

> *The carnal substance sitteth on the right hand of God. After this understanding of the Presence, He is not in the sacrament. He is absent, for He saith He will leave the world. And in another sense He saith He will be with us until the end of the world. Expounded thus by St. Austen—"He goeth away after a certain sort, and is with us still after a certain sort." The manhood is ever in heaven; His Divinity is everywhere present. When He was here He was* circumscriptive *in one place, as touching His natural Body.* Secundum ineffabilem gratiam—*"I will be with you till the consummation." Christ sits in heaven and is present in the Sacrament by His working.*[2]

Of the five principal grounds which Ridley alleges for the repudiation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the fifth is:—

> *The certain persuasion of this Article of faith, "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God."* [3]

Ridley examines the significance of the term *real* as used to describe the Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It may mean that the Body of Christ is present *transcendenter, i.e. secundum rem aliquam quae ad corpus Christi pertinet*; or it may have the significance of *the*

[1] *Brief Declaration*, p. 108.

[2] Reported utterance in the debate in the House of Lords. *Brief Declaration*, pp. 274 f., Ed. Moule.

[3] *Works*, p. 176, P.S. Comp. p. 199.

very same thing, involving the conception that the Body of Christ is actually present.

In the former sense, Ridley admits the *real Presence*; in the latter sense, he denies it. If *really* is the equivalent of *truly, i.e. spiritually, by grace and efficacy*, he grants that the natural Body and Blood of Christ are in the sacrament *vere et realiter*; but if it means that the natural Body having motion is contained under the form of bread and wine, he refuses it.[1]

Ridley's opponents in the Disputation at Oxford alleged Christ's post-Ascension appearances as proving that *notwithstanding His Ascension and continual abiding at the right hand of the Father, He may be really and corporally on earth.*

In answer to this Ridley dwells on the significance of the Session. If it involves Christ's corporal Presence in heaven, then it *stoppeth the same corporal Presence in the Sacrament*; but if it is merely a symbolical expression signifying *the stability of Christ's Kingdom* and *His everlasting equality with the Father in the glory of heaven*, then the question becomes one as to the reality of Christ's humanity; and Ridley maintains that presence which is corporal must be also local, and cannot be universal or in more than one place at a time.[2]

This is worthy of note as illustrating the point which has been referred to previously, that the emphasis which the Reformers placed on the Session of Christ in its relation to His Presence on earth must not be dissociated from their conception of His humanity. The argument that *the right hand* of God is everywhere merely affected their interpretation of the significance of the Session:

[1] See *Works*, pp. 196, 213, 273, P.S. This position was approved by Archbishop Laud. See below, p. 202.

[2] *Works*, p. 221, P.S.

it did not affect their belief in the necessity of Christ's Body being in one place only at a time. Belief in the reality of Christ's humanity was the citadel, so to speak, of their own position, and the main instrument of their attack upon the mediaeval position.

Bradford maintains that the doctrine of Transubstantiation involves either a confusion of the two natures in Christ, or a denial of the human nature.[1]

But he urges that the Sacrament should be *esteemed and called after Christ's words, namely, "Christ's body," and the wine "Christ's blood";* not in the sense that there is *any other presence of Christ's body than a presence by grace, a presence by faith, a presence spiritually and not corporally, really, naturally and carnally, as the Papists do mean: for in such sort Christ's body is only in heaven, "on the right hand of God the Father Almighty," whither our faith in the use of the sacrament ascendeth, and receiveth whole Christ accordingly.*[2]

Bucer feared the results of the reaction from the Roman doctrine. He perceived the danger of men so confining their thought about Christ to that of His bodily Presence in heaven, as to deny His Presence on earth in any wise.

Writing with reference to the opinion of Peter Martyr and Melanchthon, he says:—

While they seek to provide against our bringing down

[1] *Sermons, Meditations*, pp. 90, 96, P.S.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95. Comp. p. 392. This conception of faith ascending to heaven finds frequent expression in the writings of Calvin and the English Reformers. See *Calvin's Tracts*, vol. ii. pp. 91, 121, 187, 192 f., 229, Ed. Bev. Compare also the Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches of France, *ibid.*, p. 160; Coverdale, *Works, Fruitful Lessons, etc.*, pp. 331, 455, P.S.; Jewel, *Controv. with Harding, Of Adoration, Works*, vol. i. p. 542, P.S.; Grindal, *Fruitful Dialogue*, p. 46, P.S.; Sandys, *Sermons*, pp. 88 f., P.S.

Christ the Lord from heaven and confining Him in the bread, and offering Him to the Communicants to be fed upon without faith, a thing that none of our party ever thought of, they themselves go so far as, without any warranty of Holy Scripture, to confine Him to a certain limited place in heaven.[1]

Calvin is careful to avoid the one-sidedness which Bucer deprecates. While asserting that the Ascension involved the withdrawal of Christ from the earth in the sense in which He had come to it, he insists on the fact that Christ has not ceased to be with us. The withdrawal relates only to His bodily Presence.[2]

He explains the union of the believer with Christ as effected not by contact with Christ's actual Body and Blood but by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Seeing that Christ's Body is in heaven, and we on earth, how can we be made partakers of Christ's substance, and thus have one life with Him? This He accomplished by the secret and miraculous agency of the Spirit, to whom it is not difficult to unite things otherwise disjoined by a distance of space. Our minds must be raised to heaven where Christ is.[3]

The theory of Christ's bodily Presence in the Supper Calvin regards as reducing His humanity to mere phantom.[4]

Calvin admits that (philosophically speaking) there is no place above the skies; but, since the Body of Christ, bearing the nature and mode of a human body, is finite and is contained in heaven as its place, Christ's Session

[1] *Letter to Brentius, Original Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 544 f., P.S.
[2] *Catechism of Geneva, Calvin's, Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 48, Ed. Bev.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 91. Comp. p. 160.
[4] *Short treatise on the Lord's Supper. Op. cit.*, p. 187.

at the right hand of God necessarily signifies the local separation of the Body from the earth.[1]

And it is not merely the true conception of the humanity of Christ that is nullified by the doctrine of Transubstantiation, but also the Scriptural statements of His Ascension, and predictions of His Return. *If He now occupies the whole world in respect of His Body, what else was His Ascension, and what will His Descent be, but a fallacious and empty show?*[2]

Coverdale follows Bucer in finding fault with the *Reformed* doctrine of the Presence of Christ. He charges Zwinglius and Oecolampadius with being so intent on denying the corporal Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper as to fail to teach positively the real nature of the Presence, with the result that Luther regarded them as making the sacraments bare signs, and void of the spiritual substance.[3]

But Coverdale is as emphatic as Calvin in his condemnation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation as diminishing the glory of Christ, and destroying the truth of His human nature.[4]

He insists on the absence of Christ according to the flesh, and regards that as the significance, in part, of the Session at the right hand of God.

> *Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; there ought we to touch Him with the lifting up of a faithful heart, and with the worship which He through His Spirit worketh and divideth unto us.*[5]

[1] See the *Mutual Consent of the Churches of Zurich and Geneva*, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

[2] *Second Defence of the Sacraments*, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

[3] *A Treatise on the Sacrament*, *Works*, *Fruitful Lessons*, *etc.*, pp. 463 f., P.S.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 455.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 331. Comp. pp. 382 ff.

Becon repudiates the doctrine of Transubstantiation on the two grounds: (1) That Christ's Body is a real body, (2) that His Body is in heaven, and not on earth. He says:—

It is proper to God alone to be in all or in divers places at once: which property no creature hath, no, nor angel. Therefore, forasmuch as the Body of Christ, although immortal and glorified, is, remaineth, and abideth still a creature, and is not swallowed up, as I may so speak, of the Divine Nature, but being joined to the Divine Nature abideth still a creature, and very man, it therefore followeth most certainly that Christ's Body, taken up into heaven, neither is, neither can be both in heaven and in earth at once.

He cites among other passages Mc. xvi. 19; Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. x. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 22.[1]

The contrary conception that the glorification of Christ's Body involves its deification receives more specific treatment in the following passage:—

Who seeth not now, except he be wilfully blind, that forasmuch as the Body of Christ is a creature, although glorified and clad with immortality, it is and can be but in one place at once? To teach the contrary is none other thing than to evacuate and utterly to destroy the nature of Christ's humanity, and to affirm, with certain heretics, that the Body of Christ is deified, and so swallowed up of the Godhead, that it is now in all places with the Godhead at all times.[2]

Becon brings his position into line with the words of Institution. He says:—

When one sentence of the Holy Scripture seems to re-

[1] *Catechism*, pp. 270 ff., P.S. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

pugn a multitude of sentences, the one sentence ought to give place to the multitude, and not to destroy the verity of the others. As for example, this one sentence, "This is my body," grossly taken and fleshly understood, yea, and received after the literal sense, seemeth to teach that the natural, corporal, real, substantial and essential Body of Christ is in the sacrament: but if we consider the other places of the Holy Scripture, which are many in number, affirming plainly that Christ, as concerning His corporal Presence, is not on earth, but in heaven, and so in heaven that He neither is, or yet shall be in any other place until the Day of Judgment, we shall easily grant that it is but a sacramental and figurative speech, and confess that this one sentence ought to give place to a multitude; so that the sacrament is called Christ's Body, because it signifieth and representeth to us the Body of Christ and not that it is so in deed and in truth.[1]

Archbishop Sandys gives in one of his sermons a comprehensive statement which embraces the principal features of the Eucharistic doctrine of the English Reformers. He writes :—

The food offered us at the Lord's table is to feed our souls withal: it is meant for the mind, and not for the belly. Our souls, being spiritual, can neither receive nor digest that which is corporal: they feed only upon spiritual food. It is the spiritual eating that giveth life. "The flesh," saith Christ, "doth nothing profit." We must lift up ourselves from these external and earthly signs, and like eagles fly up and soar aloft, there to feed on Christ which sitteth on the right hand of the Father, Whom the heavens shall keep until the latter day. From thence and from no other altar shall He come, in His natural body,

[1] *Catechism*, p. 290.

to judge both quick and dead. His natural body is local, for else it were not a natural body: His body is there, therefore, not here: for a natural body doth not occupy sundry places at once. Here we have a sign, a memorial, a commemoration, a representation, a figure effectual, of the body and blood of Christ. . . . Spiritually by faith we feed upon Christ, when we steadfastly believe that His body was broken, and His blood shed for us upon the Cross; by which sacrifice, offered once for all, as sufficient for all, our sins were freely remitted, blotted out, and washed away. This is our heavenly food, our spiritual food. . . . Sweeter it is unto us than honey, when we are certified by this outward Sacrament of the inward grace given unto us through His death: when in Him we are assured of remission of sins and eternal life.[1]

Jewel appeals to the fact of the Session in his refutation of the idea that there is a *fleshly being of Christ's body in our bodies.*

He says:—

We are in Christ sitting in heaven, and Christ sitting in heaven is here in us, not by a natural, but by a spiritual means of being.

He appeals to Augustine's words *After that Christ is risen from the dead, and ascended unto the Father, He is in us by His Spirit*; and he quotes Holy Scripture and the Fathers in support of the view that the union with Christ is spiritual, unhindered by *distance of place*, and not needing *corporal presence*. He points out that when the Fathers speak of the union as corporal and natural, they do not mean that Christ's Body is corporally or naturally in us, but that we have life in us, and are become immortal

[1] *Sermons*, pp. 88 f., P.S.

because by faith and spirit we are partakers of the natural Body of Christ.[1]

Jewel was a vehement opponent of the conception that the conjunction of Deity and humanity in Christ involves the omnipresence of His Body. After a statement that the Body of Christ is now in glory, he says :—

> *Although the majesty and Godhead of Christ be everywhere abundantly dispersed, yet we believe that His Body, as St. Augustine saith, " must needs be still in one place " ; and that Christ hath given majesty unto His Body, but yet hath not taken away from it the nature of a body ; and that we must not so affirm Christ to be God, that we deny Him to be man . . . ; that the same Christ, though He be absent from us concerning His manhood, yet is ever present with us concerning His Godhead.*[2]

To Harding's argument that the Body of Christ is in heaven as in a place, and in the Sacrament without a place, Jewel answers that this involves the conception that

> *Christ's Body in the Sacrament is more glorious, more spiritual, more divine than is the very Body of Christ indeed that is in heaven, in the glory of the Father, for the more spiritual a thing is, the more it is void from the circumstance and necessity of place.*[3]

Jewel emphasizes the conception of spiritual feeding as

[1] *Controversy with Harding, Of Real Presence, Works,* vol. i. p. 477, P.S.

[2] *Apol. Works,* vol. iii. p. 59, P.S. Comp. *Defence of Apol., ibid.,* p. 535 ; *Controv. with Harding, Of Being in Many Places, Works,* vol. i. p. 482.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 484.

being the result of our faith mounting up to heaven, and not of Christ's Body coming down on earth. Thus he writes: *Christ's Body is in heaven: thither therefore must we direct our hearts: there we must feed: there must we refresh ourselves: and there must we worship it.*[1]

Hooker emphatically repudiates the conception that Christ as man is omnipresent. He bases his argument, not on the fact of Christ's Session in heaven, but on the essential properties of manhood.

He says:—

> *Christ is essentially present with all things, in that He is very God, but not present with all things as man, because manhood and the parts thereof can neither be the cause nor the true subject of such presence.*[2]
>
> *If His majestical Body have now any such new property, by force whereof it may everywhere really even in substance present itself, or may at once be in many places, then hath the majesty of His estate extinguished the verity of His nature.*[3]

He maintains that the humanity of Christ is only present on earth by way of conjunction; but he allows that *presence by way of conjunction is in some sort presence.*[4]

It is a presence of *knowledge and assent* as concerns the soul, and of *force and efficacy* as concerns the body. The *value and merit of the sacrificial body of Christ has no measured certainty of limits,* but is infinite in the *possibility of application:* the soul of Christ by *knowledge and assent*

[1] *Sermon, Works,* vol. i. p. 12, P.S. Comp. *Apol. Works,* vol. iii. p. 64; *Defence of Apol., Works,* vol. iii. p. 547 ff.

[2] *Eccl. Pol.* v. lv. 4 (comp. liv. 9); *Works,* vol. i. p. 616, Ed. Oxon. 1890.

[3] *Op. cit.,* § 6; *ibid.,* p. 617.

[4] *Op. cit.,* § 7; *ibid.,* p. 618.

is present with all things that the Deity of Christ worketh.[1] So that Christ's promise to be everywhere present is capable of fulfilment :—

(1) By virtue of His essential presence of Deity :

(2) by virtue of His knowledge and assent of soul, and force and efficacy of body.

Beza maintains that the absence of Christ's humanity from the earth is required both by the fact of the Ascension, and by the properties of the manhood.

He says :—

> *Christ's Session at the right hand of the Father signifies that He is partner of His supreme government, in respect of which we say that the majesty of God is in heaven, not meaning that it is confined there, but that it is most powerfully manifested there : although it is certain that the humanity of Christ, in all that properly appertains to it, is in heaven, not on earth, since otherwise neither His Ascension nor His Body would have any reality in fact* (*imaginaria ipsius Ascensio, imaginarium corpus*).[2]

Beza also repudiates the idea of union of the essential Divinity with the consecrated Elements in the Lord's Supper, on the ground that it would go near to destroy the *sursum corda* so much and so greatly celebrated by the Ancients. For if the Elements really contain such immense treasures, what need have we to look up to the natural body above ? Or what have we to do but to look down to those impanated riches ; to the Elements ennobled with all graces and virtues, and replenished with that very Divinity which makes the humanity so considerable ? [3]

[1] *Op. cit.*, §§ 8, 9 ; *ibid.*, pp. 620 f. [2] On *Eph.* i. 20.

[3] *De Coene Domini. Contra Hasch*, p. 147, quoted by Waterland, *The Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 583.

Archbishop Laud, in his conference with Fisher, quotes with approval Ridley's statement that the real presence of Christ's humanity in the Supper can only be maintained in respect of its virtue and grace; and he claims that Protestants of all sorts (including English Churchmen) maintain a true and real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which is not that of corporal Presence nor Transubstantiation, but a presence *by Spirit and Grace.*[1]

Laud appears to have made nothing of the Session of Christ. He stoutly repudiates Transubstantiation, refuses the theory of Concomitance, alleges that the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist consists in its being a commemoration or representation of the one sacrifice once offered, asserts that the Eucharist is a sacrament *sanguinis effusi*, of blood shed and poured out (*and blood poured out, and so severed from the body, goes not along with the body per concomitantiam*) and yet with it all he entirely ignores the bearing of the Session upon the conception both of Christ's Offering and of His Presence with His Church.

Pearson explains the Ascension as *a true, local translation of the Son of man, as man, from these parts of the world below into the heavens above; by which that body, which was before locally present here on earth, and was not so then present in heaven, became substantially present in heaven, and no longer locally present in earth.*[2]

The significance of the Session consists, in part, in the idea of Christ's permanent continuance as man in that place and state of glory to which He was so translated.

Jeremy Taylor examines at length the conception of the spiritual Presence of Christ as explained by Roman and

[1] *Conf. with Fisher, c.* 35, p. 193, Ed. 1686.
[2] *Exposition of the Creed*, p. 513, Ed. Sinker.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 527 f.

Protestant divines. He insists on the necessity of caution and exactness in the use of the word *spiritual*, if the difference between the two parties is to be understood.

> *We say that Christ's body is in the sacrament "really, but spiritually." They say it is there "really, but spiritually." . . . Where now is the difference? Here, by "spiritually" they mean, "present after the manner of a spirit"; by "spiritually" we mean, "present to our spirits only," that is, so as Christ is not present to any other sense but that of faith, or spiritual susception: but their way makes His body to be present no way, but that which is impossible, and implies a contradiction: a body not after the manner of a body, a body like a spirit, a body without a body; and a sacrifice of body and blood, without blood. They say that Christ's body is truly present there, as it was upon the Cross, but not after the manner of all or any body, but after the manner of being as an angel is in a place: that is, there spiritually. But we, by the real presence of Christ do understand Christ to be present, as the Spirit of God is present in the hearts of the faithful, by blessing and grace: and this is all which we mean beside the tropical and figurative presence.*[1]

In a later passage Jeremy Taylor contrasts the term *natural* with *spiritual* or *real*.

Natural is used of the body of Christ both as it was on earth and as it is glorified in heaven.

> *If Christ's body were naturally in the sacrament, I demand whether it be as it was in the last Supper or as upon the Cross, or as it is now in heaven? Not as in the last Supper, for then it was frangible, but not broken; but typically, by design, in figure and in sacrament, as it is*

[1] *Of the Real Presence, Works*, vol. ix. p. 428, Ed. Heber, 1828. Comp. p. 423.

evident in matter of fact. Not as on the Cross, for then the body was frangible and broken too, and the blood spilled; and if it were so now in the sacrament, besides that it were to make Christ's glorified body passible, and to crucify the Lord of Life again, it also were not the same body, which Christ hath now; for His body that He hath now is spiritual and incorruptible, and cannot be otherwise, much less can it be so and not so at the same time properly, and yet be the same body. Not as in heaven, where it is neither corruptible nor broken; for then in the sacrament there were given to us Christ's glorified body; and then, neither were the Sacrament a remembrance of Christ's death, neither were the words of Institution verified, "This is my body which is broken," besides, in this we have Bellarmine's confession: Neque enim ore corporali sumi potest corpus Christi, ut est in caelo. But then if it be remembered that Christ hath no other body but that which is in heaven; and that can never be otherwise than it is; and so it cannot be received otherwise properly; it unanswerably follows, that if it be received in any other manner (as it must, if it be at all) it must be received, not naturally or corporally, but spiritually and in deed. By a figure, or a sacramental, spiritual sense, all these difficulties are easily assorted, but by the natural, never.[1]

He examines the two ways in which those who maintained an actual presence of Christ's Body in the Elements tried to reconcile their position with the fact of His departure.

The *Ubiquitaries* appealed to the hypostatical union as involving the presence of Christ's human nature wherever the Deity is, i.e. everywhere. The *Romanists* denied that the human nature is actually everywhere, but main-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 492 f.

tained that it may be where, and in as many places as, Christ pleases. The two opinions, Jeremy Taylor says, are concentred on the main impossibility: that is, that Christ's Body can be in more places than one.[1]

Christ is with us by His Spirit, but Christ is not with us in body; but if His body be here too, then there is no way of substantial, real presence, in which those words can be true, "Me ye have not always." [2]

When He went from hence, He was to come no more in person, and therefore He sent His substitute; and therefore to pretend Him to be here in person, though under a disguise which we see through with the eye of faith, and converse with Him by presential adoration of His humanity, is in effect to undervalue the real purposes and sense of all the sayings of Christ concerning His departure hence, and the deputations of the Holy Spirit. But for this, because it is naturally impossible, they have recourse to the Divine omnipotency: "God can do it, therefore He does." [3]

Writing of the blessings which are received in the Lord's Supper, he says:—

This body (i.e. the natural body of Christ) being carried from us into heaven, cannot be touched or tasted by us on earth; but yet Christ left to us symbols and sacraments of this natural body; not to be, or to convey that natural body to us, but to do more and better for us, to convey all the blessings and grace procured for us by the breaking of that body, and the effusion of that blood; which blessings, being spiritual, are, therefore, called His body spiritually, because procured by that body which died for us. . . . That is, plainly thus—therefore we eat Christ's spiritual body, because He hath given us His natural body

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 508. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 510. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 512.

to be broken, and His natural blood to be shed, for the remission of our sins, and for the obtaining the grace and acceptability of repentance.[1]

Isaac Barrow proclaims the Session of Christ as the safeguard against various erroneous opinions about His Person. He sets it over against the Eutychians, with their conception of the conversion of the humanity of Christ into His Divinity; the *German Ubiquitaries*, with their assertion that the Lord, according to His human nature, corporally doth exist everywhere; the *Lutheran Consubstantialists and Roman Transubstantiators* with their belief that the Body of our Lord is here upon earth at once present in many places.[2]

In opposition to these several theories, he says:—

Our Lord continueth still a man: and as such He abideth in heaven, and therefore He doth not exist everywhere or other where. It is the property of a creature to have a definite existence, or to be only in one place at a time; for could it be in divers places at once, it might by like reason be in any or every place, and consequently it might be immense; nor can we conceive a thing to be at once in several distant places, without its being multiplied in essence: it especially is repugnant to the nature of a body at once to possess several places, seeing its substance and quantity do not really differ, or are inseparably combined, whence it cannot be multiplied in dimensions, answerable to many localities, without being multiplied in substance: wherefore since our Lord, as man, did by a proper local motion ascend, pass through, and enter into the heavens . . . we must not suppose Him to be

[1] *The Worthy Communicant*, chap. i. sec. iii.: *Works*, vol. xv. p. 422.

[2] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 370, Ed. 1861.

anywhere corporally upon earth. He is indeed everywhere by His Divinity present with us; He is also in His humanity present to our faith, to our memory, to our affection; He is therein also present by mysterious representation, by spiritual efficacy, by general inspection or influence upon His Church: but in body, as we are absent from Him, so is He likewise separated from us.

Philippi regards the Lutheran watchword, *Dextra Dei ubique est*, as fully justified.[1] The heaven of the Session is not a place but a *status caelestis*.

He criticizes the *Reformed* mode of thought on the ground that it takes the symbolism of the Session literally, but he ignores the fact that the true basis of its conception was the belief in the verity of Christ's humanity.

It was not Session as a property of the Divine nature that was being interpreted, but the Session of the Man Christ Jesus, following, in historical sequence, the fact of the Ascension.

The Lutheran conception, placed in this context, must be shown to be reconcilable with the reality of manhood, and with Christ's teaching about His own departure, and with His teaching about the coming of the other Comforter; but this Philippi makes no attempt to do, except that he explains the visible Ascent and Return as figurative acts, corresponding to figurative words which are used to describe the manifestation of Divine omnipresence.

Ebrard condemns all attempts to associate the phrase *the right hand of God* with the conception of place; and he rules out as equally irrelevant both the Lutheran idea of ubiquity and the *Reformed* idea of particular locality.

Christ's Session *at the right hand* of God signifies partici-

[1] *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. ii. p. 42, Engl. Transl., Banks (T. & T. Clark).

pation in the Divine dominion and sovereignty, and that alone.

But he allows that such phrases as ἐν ὑψηλοῖς contain distinct determination of locality, and he repudiates the idea that the heavens into which Christ has ascended is the state of being above or beyond space, regarded as an attribute of God.

Christ as man has entered into the abiding enjoyment of the presence of God, in that sphere of the world of space in which the will of God is perfectly done, and where no sin hinders Him from the full and adequate revelation of Himself.[1]

Bishop Westcott emphasizes the difference in the manner of Christ's Presence on earth before and after the Ascension.

> *The appearances of Christ during the great forty days, however mysterious, still set Him in connexion with particular places and times. It was therefore "expedient that He should go away," in order that His disciples might feel Him near them always and everywhere. And we acknowledge that this blessing has been given when we say that "He ascended into heaven." For we are not to think of the Ascension of Christ as of a change of position, of a going immeasurably far from us. It is rather a change of the mode of existence, a passing to God, of Whom we cannot say that He is "there" rather than "here," of Whom we can all say, "God is with me," and if God then Christ Who has ascended to the right hand of God.*[2]

This emphasis on the Presence of Christ on earth now as, and after the manner of God is not different from that

[1] See Olshausen and Ebrard, *Comment. on Heb.*, p. 28, Engl. Transl., Fulton. Comp. Delitzsch, on Heb. i. 3.

[2] *The Historic Faith*, p. 80.

which characterizes the teaching of the English Reformers, but it has a difference of purpose. In their case, the objective was the overthrowing of the doctrine of Transubstantiation and the repudiation of any conception of the continued presence on earth of the localized Body and Blood of Christ: but Bishop Westcott, writing more than three centuries later, had in mind the possible exaggerations of their position, and his purpose was obviously to encourage belief in that Presence of Christ which cannot be limited or localized, the Presence which is the essential property of the Divine nature.

Professor Swete refers to the Ascension in similar language. He says:—

> *As the Incarnation was not a physical descent, so the return of the Incarnate to the Father was not a physical elevation; the momentary lifting up of the risen Christ in the sight of the Eleven can only be regarded as a symbol of the lifting up of our humanity in Him to that spiritual order which is as far above our present life as the visible heaven is above the earth.*[1]

In other words, the Ascension had for its main purpose the declaration that Christ, as man, had passed out of the physical state into the spiritual; for though physical elevation was not the manner of the return to the Father, the Ascension did signify the withdrawal of the physical and corporal Presence.

Up to this point Professor Swete is at one with Bishop Westcott: but a difference of position seems to underlie their statements of the nature of the Presence that remains. Whereas Bishop Westcott appears to associate the Presence of Christ essentially with the Presence and

[1] *The Ascended Christ*, p. 8.

work of the Holy Spirit,[1] Professor Swete introduces the conception of a presence which is related to the *power of the risen and ascended Body of the Lord.*

Thus he writes :—

> *While the sacred Humanity retains all that is essential to human nature, it must needs be free from all conditions of space.*[2]

Again :—

> *No adoration, of course, is intended or ought to be done to the symbols . . . nor to any corporal or localized presence whatsoever ; the Real Presence is after the manner of the Spiritual life into which the humanity of the Lord has passed. But when Christ is present, although His presence is not corporal, He is to be adored.*[3]

These passages seem to support the conception that the continued Presence of Christ on earth involves that of His humanity in its spiritual condition, and rendered capable of omnipresence ; as also does the Professor's criticism of Hooker's conception of a *Presence of force and efficacy infinite in possibility of application,* as not recognizing fully the power of the risen and ascended Body of the Lord.[4]

[1] Comp. *The Historic Faith,* p. 80 ; *The Gospel according to St. John* (xiv. 16 ff.), pp. 205 f., Ed. 1894.

[2] *The Ascended Christ,* p. 9. [3] *Op. cit.,* pp. 120 f.

[4] *Ibid.* There is one passage which by itself would suggest the other conception of Christ's Presence on earth.

The Presence of the Spirit with the Church is the complement of the Presence of the Son in heaven, a "vicarious power" which fills the place of the absent Lord and makes Him spiritually present with us, and by which He speaks and teaches to the end of time (p. 56).

But when read in conjunction with the words quoted above, this passage seems to mean, not that Christ is present after the manner in which He and the Holy Spirit are one, but that a continual presence of His glorified humanity is effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Sparrow Simpson propounds the question as to whether the spiritual body can be found somewhere in space, only to declare it to be unanswerable.

> *The perfect human state consists not in becoming pure spirit, but in the body's adaptation as the perfect expression of spirit; it is body still, although existing under spiritual conditions. But what those conditions are it is impossible with our present knowledge to say.*[1]

[1] *Our Lord's Resurrection*, pp. 204 f.; *Oxford Library of Practical Theology*.

CHAPTER VI

THE SESSION AND HEAVEN

THE conception of heaven which prevailed in early Christian thought seems to have been that of a locality where the sovereignty of God is unchallenged by the forces of evil, and the manifestation of His glory is unique both in manner and degree.

Opinion differs as to whether this emphasis on locality characterized the teaching of our Lord and the Apostles. One writer, while admitting that the nature of heaven is fundamentally ethical, maintains that our Lord meant to localize the thought of heaven.

> *In His teaching God is no more all-pervading spirit, lost in negative infinitude. God as transcendent, immanent, infinite, alone does not satisfy His revelation of "the Father in heaven." That name implies that in some world beyond there is a supreme manifestation of His Presence, a Father's House, an enduring Holy of Holies.*[1]

Another writes :—

> *Scripture freely speaks, on the one hand, of God as everywhere present and as manifesting Himself in different ways in all parts of His creation, and, on the other hand, as specially present in heaven and manifesting*

[1] Dyson, Hastings, *D.C.G.*, *s.v.* Heaven.

His glory in a peculiar sense there. And we can only say that it is with Him, though in a higher sense, as it is with the sun "which shines everywhere yet especially displays its full splendour in the firmament." Neither can we disconnect the idea of locality absolutely from our conception of heaven. It belongs to the condition of our present mental life and experience to think of heaven more or less in terms of locality.[1]

Another believes that in the conception of the sacred writers the emphasis was laid on the idea of state rather than locality. If the thought of locality was present at all in their minds it occupied only a secondary place.[2]

But there can be no doubt that in the subsequent thought of the Church the conception of a localized heaven was dominant for centuries. This necessarily involved the idea of state or condition, but that was secondary. Heaven was primarily a place, and entrance into it was only possible through *the grave and gate of death.*

This conception finds early expression in the writings of Justin Martyr. In his treatment of the argument from fulfilled prophecy, Justin answers Trypho's objections to the humiliation of Christ by pointing out that the two Advents have been foretold; and he cites Ps. cx. 1 to show that—

the Father of all, God, was about to carry Christ into heaven, and there to retain Him until He should destroy the powers that were hostile to Him, and the number of the good, who had been foreknown by Him and furnished with virtue, should be fulfilled, for whose sake He had not yet brought in the conflagration.[3]

[1] Salmond, Hastings, *D. B.*, *s.v.* Heaven.
[2] Dr. William Milligan, *The Ascension of our Lord*, p. 25.
[3] *Apol.* i. 45; Migne, *P.G.*, vi. 396.

In this locality there were supposed to be varying degrees of approach to the *seat of God,* the place of the supreme manifestation of His Presence. Thus Ambrose contrasts Christ's immediate exaltation to the highest heaven with the gradual exaltation of men through the seven heavens.

Ille quidem ascendit super omnes caelos ad Dei sedem: homines autem a primo caelo ad secundum, etc.[1]

Ruffinus says that *Christ ascended into the heavens not where the Word of God had not been before, seeing that He was always in the heavens and remained in the Father, but where the Word made flesh had not sat before.*[2]

Similarly Augustine's refusal of the conception that Christ's manhood is ubiquitous because conjoined with the Godhead, was based not merely on the ground that such a view would destroy belief in the reality and truth of Christ's humanity, but also on the conviction that Christ, as man, had entered at the Ascension into a new locality from which He was destined at some future date to return.[3]

Augustine did not entertain the idea of a literal Session of Christ,[4] but he did believe in a sphere determined by limits of space, where the immortal Body of Christ now has its dwelling.[5]

Leo the Great regarded the Session of Christ as the exaltation of human nature, and its association with the glory of the Father on the throne. The exaltation involved both for the Lord and for His disciples a literal

[1] *In Psalm.* xxxviii.; Migne, *P.L.*, xiv. 1048.
[2] *In Symb. Apost., c.* 31; Migne, *P.L.*, xxi. 367.
[3] See, e.g., *De Pres. Dei, Epist.* clxxxvii. *c.* 10; *Opera,* Tom. ii. 1021, Ed. Bened., Par., 1836.
[4] See *Sermo* ccxiv. 8; *Opera,* Tom. v. 1377.
[5] *Ibid., c.* 9.

ascension to a *place above all the heavens at the Father's right hand.*[1]

Similarly Gregory the Great emphasizes the literal and corporal aspect of the Ascension, and speaks of it as the withdrawal from earth of Christ's bodily Presence, and the entrance in the body to the innermost heavens (*corporaliter caeli interiora penetravit*).[2]

John of Damascus was one of the first to distinguish clearly between God as He is in Himself, knowing no limits of space and place, filling all things, being above all things, and Himself embracing all things, and God as He is revealed to His moral creation, manifesting His power and grace more in one place than in another.

And this distinction enabled him, on the one hand, to banish the idea of locality from his conception of the *right hand of God*, and, on the other hand, to retain it in his conception of heaven. For God, who is in no place, can be said to have His place where His grace and power are manifested ;[3] and therefore heaven is *His seat*, since the angels are there who do His will and always sing His praises. It was to this heaven, as a place, that the Body of Christ was taken up.

John's theory of the Eucharistic presence of the Body and Blood of Christ involves this idea of a localized heaven : for he maintains that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood, not through the original Body coming down from heaven, but through their identification with the Body by the operation of the Holy Spirit.[4]

The conception of heaven expressed by these writers

[1] See *Sermo* lxxiii. 4 ; Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 396 ; lxxiv. 2 ; *ibid.*, 398 ; lxxvii. 5 ; *ibid.*, 414.

[2] *Sup. Cant. Cant. expos.* i. 11, ii. 17 ; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxix., 492, 501.

[3] Comp. *De Fid. Orth.*, i. 12 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xciv. 852.

[4] See *De Fid. Orth.*, iv. 13 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xciv. 1146.

represents the general attitude of Christian thought until comparatively recent times. There seems to have been no serious attempt to get beyond the idea of locality until the nineteenth century.

The emphasis which the English and the non-German Continental Reformers laid on the presence in heaven, as involving the absence from earth, of the Body and Blood of Christ, greatly increased the hold which the conception had on the minds of men; and there was nothing in the Roman and Lutheran theories of the Presence of Christ which really affected it.[1]

Calvin, it is true, felt it to be necessary to guard himself against misunderstanding in the matter.

He writes:—

> *That no ambiguity may remain when we say that Christ is to be sought in heaven, the expression implies and is understood by us to intimate distance of place. For though philosophically speaking there is no place above the skies, yet as the body of Christ bearing the nature and mode of a human body, is finite and is contained in heaven as its place, it is necessarily as distant from us in point of space as heaven is from earth.*[2]

But it is obvious that he has in mind the Roman and the Lutheran theories of the presence of Christ's Body on earth, and not any new conception of heaven regarded in its relation to mankind in general.

In order that full justice may be done to the many generations of Christian thinkers who were satisfied with this very limited conception of heaven, it must be remembered that they entertained no idea of a literal session of

[1] See below, p. 218.

[2] *Mutual Consent of the Churches of Zurich and Geneva as to the Sacraments*, c. 25; *Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 220, Engl. Transl., Bev.

Christ at a literal right hand of God, nor did they conceive of God or of Christ, according to His Deity, as being circumscribed or localized ;[1] but they did believe that Christ, according to His humanity, was localized, existing somewhere in space other than this earth, and that this locality was the sphere in which the open vision of God was vouchsafed to those who were the true disciples of Christ.[2]

In other words, the local conception of heaven as the seat of God was the result not of defective ideas as to the

[1] *Although God indeed be not shut up in any place . . . yet, because the glory of God doth most of all shine in the heavens, and because that in heaven He giveth Himself to be seen and enjoyed of them that are His . . ., therefore God is said to dwell in heaven. Moreover, Christ our Lord, touching His divinity, is not shut up in any place, but according to His humanity once taken, which He drew up into heaven, He is in the very local place of heaven ; neither is He in the meantime here in earth, and everywhere bodily, but being severed from us in body remaineth in heaven.* Bullinger, *Sermon (viii.) on the Apostles' Creed, Decades*, vol. i. pp. 145 f., P.S. Compare Coverdale, *Remains*, p. 150, P.S. ; Hooper, *Early Writings*, p. 66, P.S. ; *Nowell's Catechism*, p. 162, P.S.

[2] The only writer of any importance (so far as my knowledge goes) who has attempted to interpret the Session as a literal, local fact, involving the occupation of an actual throne, is Meyer in his comments on Mc. xvi. 19. The repudiation of literal interpretation which generally characterizes references to the Session is to be explained on the ground that it was the obvious thing to say, and not on the ground that the other view was being actually maintained. Luther, it is true, charges the *Sacramentarii* with holding it ; but it is only too obvious that he does it with a view to throwing ridicule upon their position, and that it represents his own estimate of their position, and not their actual teaching (see e.g. Luther, *Opera*, Tom. vii. p. 391, Ed. Wit.).

I have only discovered one writer who seriously refers to belief in a literal interpretation of the Session being actually maintained, viz. Didymus Alexandrinus. He shows how impossible the view is seen to be, when it is remembered that the Father is also said to be at the right hand of the Son. See his comment on Acts ii. 25 ; Migne, *P.G.*, xxxix. 1659.

properties of the Godhead, but of legitimate and necessary ideas as to the limitations of those to whom He manifests Himself. This was clearly indicated by John of Damascus,[1] and in the Reformation Period, by Beza,[2] and later by Bishop Pearson.

The last-named writer speaks of the Ascension as—

a true local translation of the Son of Man, as Man, from these parts of the world below into the heaven above; by which that body, which was before locally present here on earth, and was not so then present in heaven, became substantially present in heaven, and no longer locally present in earth.[3]

He speaks of heaven as—

that place where the majesty of God was most resplendent. When we say Christ ascended, we understand a literal and local ascent, not of His Divinity (which possesseth all places, and therefore being everywhere is not subject to the imperfection of removing any whither), but of His humanity, which was so in one place that it was not in another.[4]

Philippi in his defence of the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity insists that the heaven where Christ is seated is *the status caelestis* and not a locality; but this is only in respect of the unique powers which, according to the theory, belong to the Manhood of Christ by virtue of the hypostatic union. From the point of view of created beings, angels and the spirits of the blessed, he allows that heaven is a definite place in which the heavenly glory is revealed in the highest degree.[5]

[1] Cf. supra, p. 215.

[2] On Eph. i. 20; cf. supra, p. 201.

[3] *Exp. of the Creed*, p. 513, Ed. Sinker. [4] *Op. cit.*, p. 516.

[5] *Comment. on Ep. to the Rom.*, vol. i. p. 42, Engl. Transl., Banks (T. & T. Clark).

Ebrard repudiates all association of place with the phrase *at the right hand of God*; but he admits that the expression ἐν ὑψηλοῖς contains a distinct determination of locality.[1]

In commenting on Heb. viii. 2 Ebrard treats all discussion about ubiquity and non-ubiquity as irrelevant; the sole point of the passage consists in the antithesis between the abiding enjoyment of the Presence of God upon which Christ, as man, has entered, and the symbolized Presence under the Old Dispensation, which denoted separation as much as nearness. Hence the language of the verse is figurative. And yet, while guarding against a materialistic exegesis, Ebrard says:—

> *We must equally beware of a false spiritualistic exegesis in the explanation of the οὐρανοὶ, as if the heavens were the mere absence of space, and the state of being above or beyond space regarded as an attribute of God. The heaven is that sphere of creation in which the will of God is perfectly done (Matt. vi. 10), and where no sin hinders Him from the full and adequate revelation of Himself. Into that sphere of the world of space has Christ ascended, as the first-fruits of glorified humanity, in order to bring us thither after Him.*[2]

Delitzsch notices the difference between the Lutheran and the *Reformed* conceptions of the heavens into which Christ passed to take His seat at the right hand of the Father.

Lutheran dogmatic theology insists, he says, on two propositions: *Dextera Dei omnipotens ejus virtus*, and *dextera Dei ubique est.* The *Reformed* theologians regarded the Ascension of Christ as not a flight beyond

[1] *On the Hebrews*, p. 28, Engl. Transl., Fulton.
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 245 f.

the bounds of the sensible universe, but a real *loci mutatio.*

Delitzsch believes that the truth lies in the combination of the two conceptions. Heaven is illocal as far as the Divine Being is concerned, but not simply illocal in reference to the Divine self-manifestation vouchsafed to the creature. In this latter sense, there is within the created universe a real heaven of glory, the place where God vouchsafes to manifest Himself in love to the blessed among His creatures.[1]

Dr. William Milligan shows that the denial of our Lord's Ascension which is based on the ground that there is no such place as heaven to which He may ascend, because He went to the Father and the Father is everywhere, *springs from too materialistic a view of those expressions which the poverty of human thought and language compels us to employ.*[2]

The conclusion which he draws from an examination of New Testament passages is *that, according to the conception of the sacred writers, "heaven" is a state rather than a place. The thought of locality may, no doubt, be involved in it, but it is not the main thought.*[3] *When, therefore, we speak of our Lord's Ascension into heaven we have to think less of a transition from one locality than of a transition from one condition to another. A change of locality is indeed implied, but it need not be to a circumscribed habitation like that of earth; it may be only to a boundless spiritual region above us and encompassing us on every side.*[4]

[1] *Comment. on the Hebrews*, pp. 56 f., Engl. Transl., Kingsbury.

[2] *The Ascension of Our Lord*, p. 21. Comp. Bp. Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, pp. 74 ff., Ed. 1890.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 26. This must not be taken to imply the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of our Lord's glorified Body. See footnote, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

The characteristic then of this later thought about the subject is not that it has abandoned the idea of heaven as a locality, but that it has embraced additional conceptions which have forced the idea of locality into a position of secondary importance. The emphasis is laid on condition rather than on locality, on privilege more than on place. Heaven is conceived of primarily as a spiritual state and only secondarily as a sphere in which that state is fully realized.

But modern thought has travelled even further than this from the earlier conception. The change of focus has introduced a larger meaning into the idea of heaven, and has enabled us to get back to the Pauline conception of the believer being seated with Christ *in the heavenlies*. As long as heaven was conceived of exclusively as a place of bliss to be reached only after the close of the earthly sojourn, this language of St. Paul had to be explained either as the language of anticipation or as referring to Christ's representation of the believer in the heavenly home.

But when the cramping influence of this idea of locality had been cast off, it was perceived that St. Paul's words had a bearing upon the present experience of the believer. The spiritual privilege and condition which are the main constituents in the newer conception can, in a measure, be entered upon here and now. Heaven is no longer a distant kingdom whose boundaries are determined by space, and the pathway to which lies in the region of the Intermediate State, but it is a spiritual kingdom the entrance into which lies open before men in this life, though the full enjoyment of its privileges and blessings is only attainable hereafter.

Thus Bishop Lightfoot writes :—

The actual spiritual life of the Christian is the same in

kind as his future glorified life: the kingdom of heaven is a present kingdom; the believer is already seated on the right hand of God.[1]

Again he says:—

To St. Paul the future glorified life is only the continuation of the present moral and spiritual life. The two are the same in essence, however the accidents may differ.[2]

And again:—

The reign of Christ has already begun. His kingdom is a present kingdom. Whatever therefore is essential in the kingdom of Christ must be capable of realization now. There may be some exceptional manifestation in the world to come, but this cannot alter its inherent character. In other words, the sovereignty of Christ is essentially a moral and spiritual sovereignty, which has begun now and will only be perfected hereafter.[3]

Dr. Armitage Robinson says that *the heavenly sphere* (*τὰ ἐπουράνια*) *is the sphere of spiritual activities: that immaterial region, the "Unseen universe," which lies behind the world of sense. In it great forces are at work . . . over all of which, be they evil or be they good, Christ is enthroned, and we in Him.*[4]

It is not enough that we should learn to think of heaven as a state rather than a locality; for we might still conceive of it exclusively as *a future state of perfect bliss*, whereas *to St. Paul's mind, "in the heavenly sphere" the very same struggle is going on which vexes us on earth.*

[1] *On Eph.* i. 14, *Notes on the Epistle of St. Paul*, p. 324.
[2] *The Epistle to the Colossians* (ii. 13), p. 184.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 140.
[4] *St. Paul's Ep. to the Eph.*, p. 22.

In other words, heaven is a sphere as well as a state, and our relation to it lies in the present as well as in the future. St. Paul's conception of heaven involves *a super-sensual view of human life.*

CHAPTER VII

THE SESSION AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Da nobis illic sedula
Devotione tendere,
Quo te sedere cum Patre
In arce caeli credimus.

Moz. Brev.

IN the preceding chapters we have concentrated our attention upon the inquiry as to the place which the Scriptural statements of our Lord's Heavenly Session have occupied in men's thoughts about His Person and His redemptive work.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the treatment which the subject has received in the Church has been confined to these questions of theology. Indeed if the Session were merely a theme for academic discussion, it would be difficult to justify its place in the Creed, and futile to expect that it would have any interest for the ordinary Christian. But it is not so. The Christian Faith is something more than a religious philosophy; it provides principles for life as well as food for thought. And these are not alternatives. The life is the result of the thought; the action is the outcome of the belief.

In the New Testament this association of faith and conduct is of the most intimate kind. We find there not only sections of practical application following sections of dogmatic teaching as their natural and necessary

sequel,[1] but also the mingling, as of things which need one another if their true function and power are to be realized, of statements of the most profound doctrine and exhortations to the most elementary of duties.[2]

It would carry us too far from our subject to dwell on another side of this relationship of faith and conduct: it must suffice to remind ourselves that while the purpose of Divine revelation is to produce a corresponding character in those who accept it, it is also true that the acceptance of the revelation is in no small measure dependent upon character. *If any man willeth to do His will he shall know of the doctrine.*[3]

This interaction of creed and life, of faith and character, is one of the surest evidences of the truth of the Christian Revelation; and any alleged part of the Christian deposit which could be shown to exhibit no moral content, and to fail before the test of power to produce healthy thought and conduct, would be open to the gravest criticism, and its claims to a place in the Creed would be very hard to justify.

The question then arises as to the manner and degree in which the doctrine of the Heavenly Session of our Lord has justified its inclusion amongst the essentials of the Faith in the history of Christendom.

The bearing of the Session of Christ upon life and conduct, as set forth in the pages of the New Testament, has been already considered:[4] we are now concerned with the subsequent thought of the Church.

[1] Conspicuous instances of this are found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the Ephesians. Comp. Rom. xii. 1; Eph. iv. 1. In each case οὖν is the link between the dogmatic and hortatory sections of the Epistle.

[2] Comp., e.g., Phil. ii. 1–11; Col. iii. 1–7; 1 Tim. ii. 1–6; Heb. x. 19–27; 1 Pet. ii. 18–25.

[3] Jo. vii. 17. Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 14. [4] See above, pp. 12 ff.

It is interesting to notice that the earliest post-Biblical references are found in contexts which are homiletic rather than dogmatic. The specific significance of the Session, beyond that of glory and dominion, was not the concern of those early teachers; what they thought of was the claim upon the discipleship of men which the attainment of such glory gave to the Lord Jesus. To them the Session was not a theme for argument, but a stimulus to discipleship. Thus Clement of Rome, exhorting the Corinthians to loyalty to Christ, cites Ps. cx. 1, Heb. i. 13 to illustrate the glory of Him whom they were asked to serve.[1] Similarly Polycarp sets before the Philippians the heavenly glory of Christ as the ground of their confidence in Him as the Personal Revelation of God.[2] It is as an incentive to faith and loyalty that the doctrine is referred to in these earlier writings.

But the Session was a ground of confidence not only in the Person of Christ but also in the efficacy of the work which He had done or was doing for men. Thus in Tertullian's writings we get an early illustration of reference to it as the evidence and pledge of the believer's future glory.[3] The Session of Jesus in His Incarnate nature *at the right hand* of God was regarded as the guarantee of the resurrection of the flesh, and of the consummation of bliss which awaited the believer. And a much later writer, Herveus, says: *He sitteth at the right hand of God that it may be manifest that He is well able to perfect His own, seeing that He merited such an exaltation.*[4]

[1] *c.* 36.

[2] *c.* 2. Comp. Irenaeus, *Contra Haer.* ii. 28, 7.; *Opera*, Tom. i. p. 387, Ed. Stieren.

[3] *De Res. Carn, c.* 51; Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 868. Comp. Augustine, *Sermo* ccxxxv. 4; Zwingli, *Exp. Chr. Fid., c.* ix., *Conf. Eccl. Ref.*, p. 43; Isaac Barrow, *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 368 f.

[4] On *Heb.* x. 12; Migne, *P.L.*, clxxxi. 1631. Comp. *A dextris*

In this connexion the interpretation should be noticed which assigned to the Session the significance of permanence and stability whether predicated of Christ's past work or of His present glory. It is a thought which has received constant expression from the time of Origen.[1]

It was in the light of this conception that many writers interpreted St. Paul's statements of the Christian's session with Christ. Regarding Christ's Session as the type and earnest of the Christian's future bliss and as signifying the permanent efficacy of His work, they ignored or repudiated all possibility of explaining such passages as referring to present experience and privilege, and treated the language as a vivid representation of future blessing.

Thus Augustine taught that Christ was seated in heaven as the Head of the Church, and therefore as the

igitur Dei sedere dicitur ut ibi se ventura credant esse membra, quo caput suum audiunt praecessisse. Haymo, *Hom. de Temp.*, xcvi. ; Migne, *P.L.*, cxviii. 548.

Honorabilis consessus offertur, ut per hunc situm susceptae humanitatis gloria declaretur : nam hoc verbo sedere, illud designatur, ut caput nostrum Christus ad Patris cognosceretur dexteram collocatum, id est, divinae majestatis sublimitatem, in qua parte ponendi sunt qui a perfidis, ejusdem salvatoris munere, segregantur. Alcuin, on Heb. viii. 1 ; Migne, *P.L.*, c. 1068. Comp. Radulphus Ardens, *Hom.*, Pars 1 ; Migne, *P.L.*, clv. 1926.

[1] See e.g. Origen on Matt. xxvi. 64, *Opera*, Tom. iii. 910, Ed. De la rue, Par. ; Hilary, *Tract in cxxxviii. Psal.*, Migne, *P.L.*, ix. 807 ; Basil, *De Spiritu S.*, *c.* vi., *Opera*, Tom. iii. 12, Ed. Bened. ; Augustine, *Sermo* ccxiii. 4, *Opera*, Tom. v. 1367, Ed. Bened., Par., 1836 ; Chrysostom, on Heb. vii. 25, *Opera*, Tom. xii. 191 f., Ed. Montfauc. ; Cyril Alex., on Is. vi. 1, *Opera*, Tom. ii. 102, Ed. Aubert ; Haymo, *Exp. in Apoc.* iii. 21, Migne, *P.L.* cxvii. 1001 ; Herveus, on Heb. viii. 3, Migne, *P.L.*, clxxxi. 1593 ; Ridley, *Works*, p. 221, P.S. ; Barrow, *Works*, vol. ii. p. 363, Ed. 1861 ; Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 227. See also *Confessiones Eccl. Reform.*, p. 635, et saepe, Ed. Niemeyer.

Church's Representative,[1] but he interpreted the statements of the believer's resurrection and session with Christ as referring by anticipation to the future bodily resurrection and glory.[2]

It is probable that this interpretation was influenced by the fact that such passages had been used to prove that the only resurrection which was contemplated in the New Testament was the spiritual and moral resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. If so, we have here another instance of exegesis being adapted to meet particular circumstances.[3] It was certainly not the earliest or the most generally accepted interpretation. Two hundred years before Augustine, Tertullian had distinguished between the spiritual and the bodily resurrection, and had pointed out that the resurrection which St. Paul declares in Col. iii. 1 to be a present experience for the Christian does not rule out a future bodily resurrection.[4]

Augustine's contemporary, Ambrose, explains these passages as signifying our representative session in Christ. Commenting on Eph. ii. 6, he writes :—

It is not that any man has earned the right of sitting

[1] Referring to Col. iii. 1, he says: *Hoc dictum est propter unitatem qua caput nostrum est et nos corpus ejus. Cum ascendit in caelum, nos ab illo non separamur. Sermo* cclxiii. 2 ; *Opera,* Tom. v. 1566, Ed. Bened., Par., 1836.

[2] *Nondum utique resurreximus sicut Christus ; sed tamen secundum spem, quae nobis in illo est, jam nos cum illo resurrexisse testatus est. Contra Faust.* xi. 7 ; *Opera,* Tom. viii. 371.

Certe enim in caelestibus Christus jam sedet, nondum autem nos ; sed quia spe certa quod futurum est jam tenemus, simul sedere nos dixit in caelestibus nondum in nobis sed jam in illo. Namque ne putares jam nunc esse perfectum, quod in spe ita dicitur tanquam perfectum sit. Contra Faust. xii. 8 ; *ibid., col.* 373.

[3] See above, pp. 61, 153.

[4] *De Res. Carn., c.* 23 ; Migne, *P.L.*, ii. 826.

in that seat of God, concerning which the Father said to the Son alone, "Sit thou on my right hand," but because in that flesh of Christ, through joint participation in the same nature, the flesh of all mankind has been honoured. . . . Therefore we do not sit, but in Christ we sit together with Him Who alone sits, the Son of man, at the right hand of God.[1]

This cannot be accepted as an accurate interpretation of St. Paul's teaching. Ambrose suggests here the idea of universal representation rather than the representation through the mystical union between Christ and the Church. He speaks of the honour bestowed upon human nature, rather than of the spiritual privilege bestowed upon the believer.

But he approaches more nearly to the latter conception in a passage in his *De Fide*, where he says that as there is unity of heavenly life in the Father and the Son by reason of the substance of the Godhead, so there is participation in spiritual life of the Son with us by virtue of the unity of His manhood with ours. And further, *as in Him we sit at the right hand of the Father, not because we sit with Him, but because we sit in the Body of Christ, so we also live in Christ through unity of body.*[2]

Cyril of Alexandria similarly explained the passages as referring to present privilege, but confined the interpretation to the idea of session by representation.

He says :—

[1] *Epist.* lxxvi. 8 ; Migne, *P.L.*, xvi. 1261. Comp. *Non ut homines sedere ad dexteram sibi patiatur Deus, sed ut in Christo sedere ; quia ipse est omnium fundamentum, et ipse est caput Ecclesiae, in quo communis secundum carnem natura praerogativam sedis caelestis emeruit : in Christo enim Deo caro, in carne autem humani natura generis omnium hominum particeps honoratur. De Fide*, v. 14 ; *ibid.*, 685.

[2] *De Fide*, iv. 10 ; *ibid.*, 643.

As He who is always in heaven and living before the face of the Father now enters and appears before the Father for us, so He is now exalted, glorified, and receives the Name which is above every name for us, that as in Him we enter even into heaven and appear before the Father, so also in Him we are glorified and exalted and called sons.[1]

Walafridus Strabo follows Augustine in explaining the statements of our session *in the heavenlies* as anticipations of the future. Commenting on Eph. ii. 6, he writes :—

Not foolishly but faithfully he accounts that as already accomplished of whose future accomplishment he has no doubt. For Christ without doubt already sits in the heavenly places; we however do not, but we hold it with a certain hope.[2]

Oecumenius seems to have adopted the idea of the believer's session by representation.

He says :—

For as our First-fruits and Head, Christ has been raised, and He has raised us through Him, so that as He is seated, the rest of His Body is also seated with Him.[3]

Alulfus refers to St. Paul's statements of his session with Christ *in the heavenlies*, written at the time when he was a prisoner in chains, and explains them as the expressions of mental concentration and confident hope.[4]

[1] *Thes. Assert.* xx. ; *Opera*, Tom. v. 195, Ed. Aubert. Comp. Leo Magn., *Sermo* lxxiii., *c.* 4 ; Migne, *P.L.*, liv. 396.

Comp. Dr. Neale's hymn, *O happy band of pilgrims*, based on a composition of St. Joseph of the Studium :—

The crown that Jesus weareth,
He weareth it for you.

[2] *Glossa Ord., Epist. ad Eph.* ; Migne, *P.L.*, cxiv. 591.

[3] *In Ep. ad Eph.*, ii. 7 ; Migne, *P.G.*, cxviii. 1192.

[4] *Tunc Paulus in carcere fortasse tenebatur, cum se consedere*

It is, he says, by retiring into this *citadel of their mind* that the saints have been able to endure persecution and despise torment, as they deem themselves seated in the heights above, and from thence look down on all things subjected to them.

In Reformation theology the practical importance of the doctrine of the Session, both as a ground of assurance and as an incentive to discipleship, was strongly emphasized. The revival of the conception of completed propitiation led naturally to a new teaching of assurance; and the Session of Christ which was regarded as the evidence of the completeness was the ground of the assurance.

This teaching of assurance, which was related specifically to the possession of forgiveness, was the natural sequel to the restatement of the doctrine of Justification. In mediaeval thought attention had been focussed upon human merit. Man was supposed to earn grace, either as a reward which it was fitting for God to bestow upon him (*gratia de congruo*), or as an obligation which God was bound to fulfil toward him (*gratia de condigno*). And this exaltation of human merit had inevitably tended to the elimination of assurance.[1] But an even greater factor which had contributed to the same result was the mediaeval theory of continuous propitiation through the

Christo in caelestibus testatur : sed ibi erat, ubi ardentem jam mentem fixerat, non illic ubi illum necessario pigra adhuc caro retinebat. Fortasse tunc enim externis catena religabat, mente tamen positus in sublimibus fuerat, quia per spei suae certitudinem jam in caelestibus sedebat. Sup. Ep. ad Eph., c. iii.; Migne, *P.L.*, lxxix. 1351.

[1] Comp. *Nothing can be devised more pestilent and ruinous than the scholastic dogma respecting the uncertainty of salvation.* Calvin, *Comm. on Rom.* (viii. 34), p. 325, Engl. Transl., John Owen.

sacrifice of the Mass. It was not merely that man had to earn grace as a reward of his works, but also that the supply of grace had, so to speak, to be continually replenished. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the assurance of the possession of forgiveness, as of a gift which covered time and eternity, was a thing unknown. But all this was changed in the Reformers' conception of Justification. They regarded it as entirely of grace, the free and undeserved pardon and acceptance of the penitent believer in Christ on account of the merits of Christ alone. Man's works had no part or lot in causing his Justification: they were the necessary fruit of it, and the evidence of a true and living faith. Moreover, the provision of this free gift had been effected once for all by the completed sacrifice and offering of Christ on Calvary, and the evidence of that completed and accepted offering was the Session of Christ in man's nature *at the right hand* of God. The result was that the Session became the ground of a new assurance, new and yet old because it was the rediscovery of the teaching of St. Paul.[1]

But comfort, encouragement, assurance constitute only one aspect of the practical issues of the doctrine of the Session. There is also the side of responsibility and obligation, represented in the New Testament by such passages as *If ye then were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God* (Col. iii. 1). This aspect of the subject was not neglected: we find it frequently emphasized in Reformation and later writings.

The quotations which follow will suffice to illustrate the Reformers' teaching of assurance in respect of the possession of forgiveness, and the departure which they

[1] Comp. Rom. viii. 34.

were conscious of making in that matter from the current conception.[1]

Jewel writes :—

> *Concerning the assurance or certainty of salvation the Scriptures are full.*[2]
>
> *If it be so presumptuous a matter to put affiance in the merits of Christ; what is it then to put affiance in our own merits.*[3]
>
> *To be assured of our salvation, St. Augustine saith, is no arrogant stoutness: it is our faith. It is no pride: it is devotion. It is no presumption: it is God's promise.*[4]

Bradford in his treatise, *Against the fear of death,* quotes Rom. viii. 34 and says :—

> *Be certain therefore, and sure of pardon of thy sins: be certain and sure of everlasting life. Do not say in thy heart, "Who shall descend into the deep?" that is, doubt not of pardon of thy sins, for that is to fetch up Christ. Neither say thou, "Who shall ascend up into heaven?" that is, doubt not of eternal bliss, for that is to put Christ out of heaven.*[5]

Archbishop Sandys, in the preamble to his will, affirmed his belief in the free and undeserved favour of God. For him the pardon of all his sins was an actual possession because Christ had *cancelled upon the cross the whole hand-writing* that was against him.

He says :—

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[1] For further illustration of the point the reader is referred to the General Index of the Parker Society Publications, *s.v.* Assurance.

[2] *Defence of Apol., Works,* vol. iii. p. 245, P.S.

[3] *Op. cit.,* p. 246.

[4] *Op. cit.,* p. 247.

[5] *Writings, Sermons, etc.,* p. 344, P.S.

As in this faith and full assurance of my perfect redemption by the death and only deserts of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God, and very Lion of the tribe of Judah, I have and do live; so in the same firm and stedfast faith and hope I end my sinful life, and gladly yield up withal my soul immortal and mortal body.[1]

In one of his sermons he speaks of *the believing Christian, the regenerate child of God,* as one who is

certain of his deliverance from the devil and from hell, assured of remission of sins and of life everlasting in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

And he adds :—

Dangerous and desperate is that doctrine of the papists which doth teach us ever to be doubtful and in suspense of our salvation. A lamentable, discomfortable, and miserable estate.[2]

The Reformers' teaching of assurance was, of course, not confined to the matter of the forgiveness of sins : it covered the whole range of man's need, both present and future.

Thus Coverdale finds in the Session of Christ the ground of confidence in respect not only of the Christian's present relation to God but also of his resurrection. It is the sure pledge to the faithful believer of his future consummation of bliss both in body and soul.

Faithful believers look unto Christ, who went before them unto the Father, and after His Passion and Death took possession of so high honour and glory, and hath carried their nature up so high unto the right hand of the Father, where He now ruleth as a mighty king of heaven and earth. Oh, how great comfort, how sure a

[1] *Sermons*, p. 447, P.S. [2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 184 f.

hope giveth it unto us, when we see our nature, our own flesh and bones, incorporated unto Christ, the only-begotten Son and eternal Word of God, in so high honour and glory! How can it be otherwise, but we must needs hope that our weak flesh also shall be taken up.[1]

Again :—

The high and glorious King, clothed with our nature, is entered into our royal palace, as one that mindeth faithfully to despatch our affairs. He is our own mediator and advocate in the presence of the Father; notwithstanding our sins committed, we have a free entrance unto God by Him. Our flesh hath He in Himself carried up, and exalted our nature unto the right hand of God the Father. Wherefore we that are bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh, do justly conceive a comfortable and assured hope, that our mortal bodies shall also be taken up, and have immortal and eternal joy.[2]

Coverdale also deals with the incentive to Christian living which the doctrine of the Session provides, and the obligation which it imposes. He says :—

That His flesh is withdrawn from us and taken into heaven, it is our great profit, to the intent that all our devotion and God's service may be directed upwards in the spirit, and that the minds of faithful believers may be drawn from earthly unto heavenly things, even unto the place where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God the Father.[3]

Peter Martyr writes :—

They which be in great favour with any man, their requests are not lightly denied by him. Wherefore Paul

[1] *Works, Fruitful Lessons, etc.*, p. 229, P.S.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 383. [3] *Op. cit.*, 384. Comp. p. 331.

(*Rom. viii.* 34) *maketh mention in what great dignity Christ is with the Father.*[1]

In spite of the emphasis which they laid on the fact of the Session of Christ, the divines of the Reformation Period do not seem to have given full value to the conception of the believer's session with Christ. They interpreted συνεκάθισεν (Eph. ii. 6) and similar expressions as denoting merely *the heavenly consciousness of the faithful.* And this idea of a subjective session of the believer satisfied such writers as Bishop Pearson and Dr. Isaac Barrow.[2] It was left to the teachers of a still later time to develop the conception of session with Christ which is involved in the believer's spiritual union with Him.

Pearson urges the necessity of belief in the Session of Christ on the ground that it inculcates obedience and gives assurance of Christ's protection and mediation.[3]

Isaac Barrow deals at length with the practical consequences of the doctrine in Christian life. We have already noticed his first point, viz., that the doctrine is a safeguard against divers errors.[4]

To this he adds six others :—

(1) It imposes the obligation upon us of living *answerably towards Christ.* We must honour, worship, fear, reverence, obey Him.

(2) It is a source of joy and comfort. Christ is seated

[1] *Commonplaces,* iii. 13, 14, p. 306, Ed. Masters, 1574.

[2] Barrow speaks of the honour conferred by the Session of Christ upon mankind in general, and upon Christians in particular because of their inseparable connexion with Christ ; but from the point of view of the Christian's state he does not appear to get beyond the conception of a mental session with Christ. Comp. *Works,* vol. ii. pp. 369 f.

[3] *Exposition of the Creed,* pp. 537 ff., Ed. Sinker.

[4] See above, p. 206.

in power as the conqueror of our enemies, and as our friend and intercessor.

(3) It confirms our faith in Him and in His promises.

(4) It encourages us to perseverance in prayer.

(5) It is an incentive to our obedience. The Lord's dignity is the pledge of a like recompense for us.

(6) It produces the elevation of our thoughts to the things which are above.[1]

Olshausen refuses the interpretation of the Christian's session with Christ which regards it as consisting in *the heavenly consciousness of the faithful*, on the ground that it makes συνεκάθισεν (Eph. ii. 6) signify *something already actually operated in the readers of the Epistle*, whereas, according to his view, the words apply equally to believers at all times, and St. Paul is therefore describing by anticipation future blessing as already realized.[2] The weakness of this criticism can be seen at once by applying it to an earlier statement of St. Paul in the same passage, viz., *You hath he quickened*, where the reference is to the raising from spiritual death, as an accomplished fact in the reader's experience.[3]

But Olshausen offers a further objection to the inter-

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 370 ff., Ed. 1861.
Comp. Charles Wesley's hymn, *Hail the day that sees Him rise.*

Still for us His death He pleads;
Prevalent, He intercedes;
Near Himself prepares our place,
Harbinger of human race.

Grant, though parted from our sight;
High above yon azure height,
Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Following thee beyond the skies.

[2] *The Ep. to the Eph.* (ii. 6), p. 171, Engl. Transl., T. & T. Clark.

[3] Comp. Heurtley, *The Union between Christ and His People*, p. 37, Ed. Thynne.

pretation, viz. that it makes the experience of Christ typical in the sense of being mere analogy, whereas Christ, being *the Second Adam*, went through an experience which was the real type of that of the saints for all time. It seems to have escaped his notice that the experience of Christ could be analogy as well as type, and that it is so used by St. Paul.[1]

Olshausen prefers the interpretation of Augustine and other earlier writers that the session of the believer with Christ was spoken of as an actual experience by anticipation only.[2] The conception of the believer's session in and with Christ, as the Head of the Mystical Body, does not appear to have occurred to him.

Philippi, commenting on Rom. viii. 34, speaks of Christ's Session as *the pledge of our preservation from all condemnation*; but the assurance comes, in his view, not from the fact that in Christ the believer is on the throne, but from the fact that Christ's exaltation involves His participation in the Divine authority, and His wielding of omnipotent power to protect His own.[3]

Hengstenberg, on the other hand, maintains that the comfort of the doctrine consists not merely in the fact that the Session signifies the participation by Christ in Divine power over heaven and earth, by virtue of which He is able to protect His own, but also in the fact that we share the position with Him even now in time, and more gloriously in eternity.[4]

[1] Comp. Rom. vi 4.

[2] Comp. Bp. Chr. Wordsworth, on Eph. ii. 6.

[3] *Comment. on Ep. to Rom.*, vol. ii. p. 42, Engl. Transl., Banks (Clark). Comp. Meyer, *in loc.*

[4] *Comment. on the Psalms*, vol. iii. p. 319, Engl. Transl., Clark.

Comp. Bp. C. Wordsworth's hymn, *See the Conqueror mounts in triumph.*

Bishop Lightfoot deals with the question as to whether these Pauline phrases, to which reference has been made, refer to the regeneration of the moral being, or to the future life of immortality conferred on the Christian potentially now, but only to be realized hereafter. He regards the issue as superfluous. He asks whether St. Paul would have separated these two ideas of life. The present spiritual life of the believer is the same in essence as the future glorified life. The life of Christ and the believer are one, and the Session of Christ involves the session of the believer also.[1]

Professor Swete takes the words of St. Paul in Eph. ii. 6 as referring to the present experience of the Christian. He says :—

> *We are sharers not only in the risen but the ascended life. Nor do we share by representation only ; through Christ, as we have seen, we have the right of personal access to God, liberty to pass the veil and enter the Holiest.*[2]

And it is not merely this right of access that is procured for us by our participation in the glorified life of Christ, but all other spiritual blessings.

> *There is a great system of communications between Christ and the Church, which makes Head and members*

Thou hast raised our human nature
In the clouds to God's right hand,
There we sit in heavenly places,
There with Thee in glory stand ;
Jesus reigns adored by angels ;
Man with God is on the throne ;
Mighty Lord, in Thine Ascension,
We by faith behold our own.

[1] See Lightfoot's comments on Eph. i. 14 (*Notes on Epp. of St. Paul*, p. 324) ; Col. i. 13, ii. 13, iii. 1. Comp. Dr. Armitage Robinson's exposition of Eph. ii. 6.

[2] *The Ascended Christ*, p. 102.

a living unity: upon the use of this system depends the life or growth of each member, and the ultimate maturity of the whole Body.[1]

It is with our thoughts concentrated on this profound truth that we bring to a close our inquiry as to the moral and spiritual value of the Heavenly Session of Christ.

The union of the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ, vital, organic union, effected through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is *the Spirit of Christ*, this is the revealed secret and condition of spiritual life and all that flows from its possession, whether it be blessing or obligation.

It is as seated with Christ *in the heavenlies* that we have forgiveness, and are *accepted in the Beloved*: it is as seated with Christ that we have *our citizenship* in heaven: it is because we are seated with Christ that our minds must be *set on the things that are above and not on the things that are upon the earth*: it is as seated with Christ that we have the power to overcome temptation and to face the opposition of *principalities and powers*: it is as seated with Christ that we are made sharers in the victory which He has already won over the world: it is as seated with Christ that we go forth (glorious paradox) to make the kingdoms of the world the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ.

These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

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